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**Sir George Scharf and the early National  
Portrait Gallery: reconstructing an intellectual  
and professional artistic world, 1857–1895.**

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**Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD, Art History at the University of  
Sussex**

**September 2017**



I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

**Signature .....**

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Sir George Scharf and the early National Portrait Gallery: reconstructing an intellectual and professional artistic world, 1857–1895.

## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the professional practice of the National Portrait Gallery's first Director Sir George Scharf (1820–95). It is the first focused analysis of his career and influence, within the nineteenth-century art and museum worlds. It attempts to position Scharf in relation to developments in art historical scholarship and the professionalization of museum practice, in the second half of the 1800s.

Chapter 1 outlines Scharf's methodology for portraiture research and considers his scientific approach alongside the establishment of art history as a discipline during his lifetime. Whilst exploring Scharf's development of research standards to be carried forward by successors, it argues for his active role amongst a growing contingent of museum professionals.

Chapter 2 reconstructs Scharf's social and professional networks, collating the names of individuals with whom he interacted and mapping the physical sites of engagement. It proposes that access to contacts proved vitally important to his official work and that Scharf himself functioned as an influential figure in this sphere.

The third chapter concerns the nature of Scharf's relationships with members of the NPG's Board of Trustees. It investigates his early collaboration with two expert Trustees and charts his interactions with consecutive Chairmen of the Board, demonstrating Scharf's increasing authority with regards to Gallery procedures.

Chapters 4 and 5 explore Scharf's interventions relative to the organization and interpretation of the collection across the NPG's early exhibition spaces. Chapter 4 argues that an increased capacity for display enabled Scharf to implement a rational hanging scheme, in line with the Gallery's instructive purpose and inspired by contemporary debates over the efficient presentation of public art. The final chapter documents Scharf's efforts to contextualize the national portraits, ranging from manipulating the exhibition environment, to expanding the NPG's catalogue according to a scholarly model.

In its examination of George Scharf's career spanning five decades, particularly his engagement with discourse surrounding public art museums in the Victorian period, this thesis aims to make a significant contribution to the fields of museum studies and studies in the history of collecting and display.

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## Abbreviations

<i>ACA</i>	Athenaeum Club Archives, London
<i>BEP, BM</i>	Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory, British Museum, London
<i>BL</i>	British Library, London
<i>BM</i>	British Museum, London
<i>BMP</i>	British Museum Press
<i>CRC, UE</i>	Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh
<i>CUP</i>	Cambridge University Press
<i>HAL</i>	Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London
<i>HMSO</i>	Her Majesty's Stationary Office
<i>KHLC</i>	Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone
<i>LVPC</i>	Later Victorian Portraits Catalogue, National Portrait Gallery, London
<i>MUP</i>	Manchester University Press
<i>NGA</i>	National Gallery Archives, London
<i>NG</i>	National Gallery, London
<i>NPG</i>	National Portrait Gallery, London
<i>NRS</i>	National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh
<i>ODNB</i>	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
<i>OUP</i>	Oxford University Press
<i>P&amp;D, BM</i>	Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum, London
<i>RAA</i>	Royal Academy of Arts Archive, London
<i>SAL</i>	Society of Antiquaries, London
<i>SKM</i>	South Kensington Museum
<i>SL, HAL</i>	Scharf Library, Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London
<i>SNPG</i>	Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh
<i>SSB</i>	Scharf sketchbook
<i>TSB</i>	Trustees' sketchbook
<i>VAM</i>	Victoria and Albert Museum, London
<i>YUP</i>	Yale University Press
<i>ZSMB</i>	Zentralarchiv, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

## Introduction

To sketch the history of George Scharf's career in the service of the Trustees would be to sketch the complete history of the National Portrait Gallery itself, so entirely was he identified with every page in that history, every purchase or acquisition made by the Trustees, and every step, which led from the modest housing of a few portraits at No. 29 Great George Street, Westminster, to the present palatial edifice in St Martin's Place, W.C.<sup>1</sup>

This tribute to Sir George Scharf by his successor Lionel Cust, following his death in 1895, perfectly expresses the difficulty often found in attempting to disentangle the man from the early Institution. Indeed, although the management of the National Portrait Gallery was ostensibly supervised by its Board of Trustees, in reality it was Scharf who was almost single-handedly responsible for the development of the collection: its day-to-day maintenance, display, research and interpretation. Aptly described by Gertrude Prescott Nuding as a 'one-man band', Scharf's remit encompassed every aspect of Gallery activity.<sup>2</sup> Between his appointment as Secretary in 1857 and his retirement as first Director of the Gallery just a few weeks before the end of his life, he oversaw the acquisition of 982 painted portraits, drawings, busts, miniatures and medals. Unlike many other public galleries and museums, the NPG was not gifted a founding collection.<sup>3</sup> Instead, Scharf worked tirelessly with the Trustees to build up a comprehensive body of authentic portraiture with which to articulate a narrative of British history. He was also intricately involved with the installation of the collection across three temporary homes preceding its final move to the purpose-built gallery at St Martin's Place, and in adjustments made with regards to accommodating the differing audiences that these location changes inspired. Therefore, scholars who have previously addressed his work have largely done so as part of a central focus on the wider history of the NPG and its administrators.<sup>4</sup> My thesis is the first in-depth study of Scharf's career and influence, charting the scope of his professional practice over the length of his 40-year tenure.

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<sup>1</sup> Lionel Cust, 12 Sep. 1895, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1895*, p.3, HAL.

<sup>2</sup> Gertrude Prescott Nuding, 'Portraits for the Nation', *History Today*, 39 (Jun. 1989), p.36. Scharf was not relieved of the more secretarial aspects of his role, such as the writing-up of Trustees' minutes and the drafting or copying of official communications, until the appointment of a succession of special clerks to assist him from 1882.

<sup>3</sup> These include the British Museum, the National Gallery and the National Gallery of British Art (Tate Gallery). Although in the NPG's case, the Earl of Ellesmere's 1856 donation of the Chandos portrait of William Shakespeare [NPG 1] can be viewed as the founding acquisition.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Marcia R. Pointon, 'Saved from the Housekeeper's Room': The Foundation of the National Portrait Gallery, London', in *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England*

I seek to extricate Scharf himself from the Institution's history and situate him firmly in relation to the intellectual milieu of his day, assessing his contribution towards both the emergence of art history as a discipline (and specifically, to the field of historical portraiture studies) and the professionalization of museum practice, during the second half of the nineteenth century. Dedicated analyses of the careers of a number of his contemporaries - including Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks of the British Museum and Sir Charles Lock Eastlake of the National Gallery - have already been undertaken, and my research aims to likewise reinstate Scharf as an active agent within the Victorian art and museum worlds.<sup>5</sup> A general tendency, especially within the Gallery, has been to consider Scharf as unique and to interpret his achievements as peculiar to his temperament. I concur that his steadfast devotion to his work and the tenacity with which he executed his official duties characterized his approach, yet, as a point of comparison, I have found Alison Petch's recent work on the career of General Pitt-Rivers helpful in terms of my own appraisal. In her 2014 essay exploring the influence of the nineteenth-century collector-curator, Petch argues that too often his activities are 'seen as those of an unusual individual, rather than of a man who was a product of his times, with a particular skill-set and set of opportunities'.<sup>6</sup> In directly comparing Pitt-Rivers with his colleague Augustus Wollaston Franks, she intends to redress this assumption, putting his life into perspective and thus contextualising his significant accomplishments. I similarly attempt to evaluate Scharf's career in relation to the work of a number of like-minded figures with whom he engaged, all united in the extent of their vocational commitment. I further propose that his regular collaboration with various scholarly, artistic and museum-world contacts was of fundamental importance to the success of his professional practice.

#### *Primary and Secondary sources*

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(New Haven: YUP, 1993); and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, 'Picturing the ancestors and imag(in)ing the nation: The collections of the first decade of the National Portrait Gallery, London', in *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> See Marjorie Caygill and John F. Cherry eds., *A.W. Franks: Nineteenth-Century Collecting and the British Museum* (London: BMP, 1997); David Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978); and Susanna Avery-Quash and Julie Sheldon, *Art for the Nation: The Eastlakes and the Victorian Art World* (London: National Gallery Company Ltd., 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Alison Petch, 'Two Nineteenth-Century Collectors-Curators Compared and Contrasted: General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers (1827–1900) and Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–1897)', *Museum History Journal*, 7, no. 2 (1 Jul., 2014): pp.189.

The primary resource for my research is the Scharf Archive, held in the National Portrait Gallery's Heinz Archive and Library, which comprises official and family material dating from 1770 to 1909. Whilst scholars have in the past drawn upon central records series, such as Scharf's correspondence with various Trustees (NPG7/1/1/4) and his monthly diaries (NPG7/3/1), subsequent cataloguing of the entire collection has enabled me to systematically interrogate this vast collection of material in a manner not previously possible.<sup>7</sup> The archive is now categorized into three sections: Scharf's work for the National Portrait Gallery; his work on external projects; and his personal papers and effects. Although useful for organizational purposes, the first and third prove somewhat arbitrary divisions; a recurring theme in this thesis is the evident lack of distinction between Scharf's professional and private life. Consequently, my substantial mining of his personal journals, correspondence and sketchbooks is justified in light of that fact that this material is often as illuminating as the official papers, when trying to map out Scharf's extensive professional networks or demonstrate his methodical approach to portrait research. Because of his close association with all Gallery procedures, it has also been necessary to look beyond the Scharf Archive as a contained entity and examine the broader institutional records covering the dates of Scharf's incumbency. These were largely generated by him and key series include: the Signed Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meetings (NPG1); the National Portrait Gallery Building Records (NPG66); the Gallery's Index and Register of Offers (NPG85); and the Registered Packets (NPG46) relating to acquisitions of the 1800s, in most cases containing evidence of Scharf's interaction with dealers or private individuals over such transactions.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, consultation of the Scharf Library, held distinct from the NPG's wider library collection, has been similarly valuable for my project.<sup>9</sup> Comprising his biographical and reference volumes, alongside heavily annotated exhibition and sales catalogues, this material outlines the central bibliographic tools that informed and shaped Scharf's work.<sup>10</sup> In addition, his habit of inserting into publications letters from friends and correspondents or from the authors, ensures the

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<sup>7</sup> The Scharf papers (NPG7) were fully catalogued in 2010 and are searchable via the Gallery's online archive catalogue (<http://archivecatalogue.npg.org.uk/CalmView/>).

<sup>8</sup> I also refer frequently to another important tranche of material: the papers of Deputy Chairman William Smith (NPG20), particularly the collected letters from Scharf (NPG20/3). It is often possible to match up the other half of their correspondence in amongst the Trustees' notes (NPG7/1/1/4/2).

<sup>9</sup> Volumes from this collection cited in this thesis, are designated 'SL, HAL'.

<sup>10</sup> The Scharf Library is made up of volumes bequeathed by Scharf and purchased from the posthumous sale of his effects (Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 7–10 Feb. 1896). How he distinguished between volumes belonging to his personal collection and to the official Gallery library during his lifetime, is not known. Scharf's run of annotated Christie's sale catalogues (1858–94) undoubtedly warrants further attention. In the margins he sketched, with varying degrees of detail, portraits encountered at pre-views or during the sales themselves (see also, Chapter 2).

library's status as an important - and largely untapped - archival resource. Perhaps an obvious problem of focusing exclusively on documentation available at the National Portrait Gallery is the fact that relatively little of Scharf's outgoing correspondence is preserved here - the very type of material that holds the potential to reflect his personal thoughts and opinions, in a way that the official papers do not. I have sought to remedy this by examining a number of external archives in search of traces of Scharf's written voice, in some instances endeavouring to marry up two halves of an exchange with several correspondents. To this end, visits to the National Records of Scotland (containing the papers of John Miller Gray), the Kent History and Library Centre (containing the papers of Philip Stanhope) and the Central Archive of the State Museums of Berlin (containing the papers of Wilhelm von Bode), have proven particularly fruitful. Each has yielded a cache of Scharf letters, generally diplomatic in tone, yet occasionally insightful in content.

A wealth of secondary material has simultaneously directed my research as I have sought to position my thesis in relation – and sometimes in opposition - to a body of work examining the development of the public art museum in the nineteenth century, the history of the National Portrait Gallery itself, and the life of George Scharf. To the latter category belongs only one recent publication: a lively account by literary scholars Helena Michie and Robyn Warhol titled *Love Among the Archives*. This explores Scharf's life as a Victorian bachelor, speculates as to the nature of his homosocial relationships, and also focuses on the authors' own experiences of researching in the National Portrait Gallery's archive.<sup>11</sup> In the introduction they muse over a possible output of their undertaking: 'was this a recovery project that (re)inserted Scharf into his proper place in a canon of art history, museum history or Victorian studies?'.<sup>12</sup> It seems to me that whilst, as mentioned above, this remains the guiding principle for my work, it is exactly what their book does not achieve. Michie and Warhol admit that '[a]rt historians or scholars of museum history might be shocked at how little we say about Scharf's key roles in the history of portrait identification or in the developing of cataloguing and display'.<sup>13</sup> Each of these absences I attempt to address, to some

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<sup>11</sup> Scharf did enjoy close friendships with those his own age, and with a number of younger men (see Chapter 2). However, I feel that the interpretation of particular archival references as indicators of his sexuality amounts to little more than supposition, and is moreover an avenue of enquiry not relevant to my project.

<sup>12</sup> Helena Michie and Robyn R. Warhol, *Love among the Archives: Writing the Lives of Sir George Scharf, Victorian Bachelor* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p.6. The only other work to focus especially on Scharf's domestic arrangements is Susan Lasdun's *Victorians at Home* (New York: Viking Press, 1981), pp. 97–103, which makes extensive use of Scharf's drawings of the interiors of his apartments at Great George Street.

<sup>13</sup> They continue: 'we would love to see such a history written and to learn more about Scharf's place in the field that has so quickly turned to quasi-forensic techniques'; Michie and Warhol, *Love among the Archives*, p. 56. As



degree, in my thesis. In terms of written histories of the NPG, Lara Perry's seminal work on the early Institution has remained a constant point of reference. Though her 1998 thesis and subsequent publication in essence centre upon the representation of women in the collection and their inclusion in the wider Gallery enterprise, her particular focus on the make-up of the Board of Trustees and the governance of the NPG in its opening decades, has nonetheless proven invaluable for my project.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the development of her research into two pertinent essays investigating the shifting composition of Gallery audiences and the nature of spectatorship in the NPG's exhibition spaces, have crucially informed my exploration of Scharf's engagement with these concerns.<sup>15</sup>

The National Portrait Gallery was conceived in the middle of the nineteenth century during a period of intensive debate surrounding the function of public art galleries and museums, and the manner in which collections should be arranged. Government Select Committees of the 1850s and 60s enquired into the organization of the British Museum, the National Gallery and the South Kensington Museum (later the Victoria and Albert Museum) and also considered their capacity to educate the public, provide moral instruction and encourage the improvement of public taste. Alongside Perry, Paul Barlow, Elizabeth Coutts, Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, Gertrude Prescott Nuding, Marcia Pointon and Brandon Taylor have also examined the social and political climate in which the Gallery was established. These authors variously explore: the significance of its pedagogic mission in light of calls for the improved education of a newly-enfranchised electorate; its unique ability to visualize and glorify the British nation; and the implications of its foundation at the height of both a popular fascination with the national past, and the Victorian cult of Hero-Worship as espoused by Thomas Carlyle among others.<sup>16</sup> Adjacent to these studies is a wider literature covering the

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suggested by the full title, this publication is prioritized as an exercise in life writing, over any intention to provide a balanced historical account of Scharf's personal or professional life.

<sup>14</sup> Lara Perry, *Facing Femininities: Women and the NPG, 1856-1899* (PhD thesis, University of York, 1998); and Lara Perry, *History's Beauties: Women and the National Portrait Gallery, 1856-1900* (Burlington, VT; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005). On the NPG Trustees, see also Andrea Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art: Contested Cultural Authority, 1890-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

<sup>15</sup> Lara Perry, 'The National Portrait Gallery and its constituencies, 1858-96', in Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd eds., *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London* (Burlington, VT; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.145-153; and Lara Perry, 'Looking like a Woman: Gender and Modernity in the Nineteenth-Century National Portrait Gallery', in *English Art, 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001), pp. 116-32.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Paul Barlow, 'Facing the Past and Present: The NPG and the Search for 'Authentic' Portraiture', in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, Joanna Woodall ed. (Manchester: MUP, 1997), pp. 291-238; Elizabeth A. Coutts, *Between History and Art: The Foundation of the National Portrait Gallery* (MA thesis, Birkbeck College, London, 1994); and Brandon Taylor, 'Instructing the whole nation: South Kensington to St Martin's Place', in *Art for the*

growth of state sponsorship of the arts and the development of national and regional art museums in nineteenth-century Britain.<sup>17</sup> A central contribution to this literature is a volume of essays edited by Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd, and titled *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London*. This explores the emergence of the concept of 'public art' during the 1800s and examines the institutional mechanisms that defined and supported it.<sup>18</sup> Other significant additions to this field include Kate Hill's work on the growth of English municipal museums between 1850 and 1914, Christopher Whitehead's detailed analysis of the context of the National Gallery's evolution in the nineteenth century, and Giles Waterfield's recent focus on the foundation and character of regional art museums in the Victorian era.<sup>19</sup> Also relevant to my research is a substantial body of critical material produced since the 1980s and in accordance with the concerns of the so-called 'new museology', which re-evaluates museums as instruments of social control. Numerous museum historians have thus drawn upon the theories of French philosopher Michel Foucault in reinterpreting these very institutions as subtle yet effective disciplinary structures.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu concerning patterns of cultural consumption has inspired various scholars in their positioning of the art museum as a potent site for both social inclusion and exclusion, and in their examination of the ritualized nature of gallery visiting.<sup>21</sup> In developing my thesis I have utilized all these sources when scrutinizing Scharf's particular participation in contemporary discourse concerning the function, organization and display of public art collections. Furthermore, in line with the emphasis of my work, I have sought to investigate the extent to which Scharf did or

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*Nation: Exhibitions and the London Public, 1747–2001* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999), pp.67–99.

<sup>17</sup> An important contribution to this first category remains Janet Miniham's, *The Nationalization of Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1977). See also Nicholas Pearson, *The State and the Visual Arts: A Discussion of State Intervention in the Visual Arts in Britain, 1760–1981* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1982).

<sup>18</sup> See Barlow and Trodd eds., *Governing Cultures*, pp.1–25.

<sup>19</sup> Kate Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850–1914* (Burlington, VT; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Christopher Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain: The Development of the National Gallery* (Burlington, VT; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); and Giles Waterfield, *The People's Galleries: Art Museums and Exhibitions in Britain, 1800–1914* (New Haven: YUP, 2015). Andrew McClellan has also written extensively on the development of the art museum on a global scale: see *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, Culture: Policies and Politics (London: Routledge, 1995); Tony Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations*, 4 (Spring 1998): pp.73–102; and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Nick Prior, *Museums and Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture* (Oxford: New York: Berg, 2002); Carol Duncan, *Civilising Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (New York: Routledge, 1995); and Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, 'The Universal Survey Museum', *Art History*, 3, no. 4 (1980): pp.448–69.

did not facilitate the conditions ascribed by these later interpreters of the nineteenth-century museum by way of his individual curatorial interventions.

### *Structure of the thesis*

In Chapter 1 I examine Scharf's methodology for portraiture research and argue for the significance of his work with regards to the development of British historical portrait studies. Lionel Cust was also the first to point out - specifically in relation to Scharf's research into portraits of Mary Queen of Scots - that he was the first person to approach the subject 'by a really scientific method'.<sup>22</sup> I accordingly consider Scharf's attitude in the context of the larger emergence of art history as a discipline during his lifetime, which increasingly promoted more rigorous standards of scholarship and the application of evidence-based research. Making special reference to the Scharf sketchbooks, I investigate his procedures for identifying sitters and authenticating portraits, and propose that these led to the formation of a set of professional standards to be carried forward by successive generations. Indeed, I further consider Scharf's role in the professionalization of museum practice, which had its roots in the second half of the nineteenth century and argue for his status as an active member of a growing professional class.<sup>23</sup>

Chapter 2 reconstructs the networks that comprised Scharf's social and professional world, and also plots the physical sites of interaction with various expert contacts across central London. I reason that his proximity to this sphere was crucial to the efficient undertaking of his work for the National Portrait Gallery, in terms of both the resources it provided and his access to a range of professional connections. I also assess Scharf's own position of influence within this field, especially the importance of the gatherings at his home in Ashley Place, a sort of cozy 'salon' at which Scharf would carefully draw together various acquaintances. I focus upon his friendships with three colleagues and official counterparts: Augustus Wollaston Franks of the British Museum, Sir Frederic William Burton of the National Gallery and John Miller Gray of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and propose that these

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<sup>22</sup> Lionel Cust, *Notes on the Authentic Portraits of Mary Queen of Scots: Based on the Researches of the Late Sir George Scharf: Rewritten in Light of New Information by Lionel Cust* (London: John Murray, 1903), p.3.

<sup>23</sup> This was the theme of a workshop I organized at the National Portrait Gallery in April 2015, entitled 'George Scharf and the emergence of the museum professional in nineteenth-century Britain'. Papers assessed the careers of Scharf and a number of official counterparts, in light of a general shift towards the professionalization of museum practice during the later 1800s. Material developed for my contribution formed the basis of Chapters 1 & 2 of this thesis, and the proceedings from this event will appear in published form in 2018 (see nt. 672).

men operated collaboratively at the forefront of advancements in art historical scholarship and museum practice, during what has been termed the 'Pre-professional' era.<sup>24</sup> Chapter 3 similarly deals with relationships, in this case the nature of Scharf's engagement with members of the NPG's Board of Trustees. I examine in detail his exchanges with two founding Trustees: William Smith and William Hookham Carpenter, and with successive Chairmen: Philip Stanhope and Charles Stewart Hardinge, in part to demonstrate the growth of Scharf's own authority and autonomy over the course of his career. I likewise present evidence to support the theory of Scharf's steady transition from loyal servant of the Board to respected and trusted associate, and ponder the fact of his ready acceptance amongst social superiors. In conjunction, I investigate Scharf's wider assimilation within various aristocratic circles, and the beneficial impact of these connections in relation to the execution of his official duties.

In Chapters 4 and 5 I explore Scharf's involvement with the organization and display of the national portraits throughout his tenure. Working roughly chronologically, Chapter 4 details his approach to picture arranging at each of the Gallery's early locations: at Great George Street, Westminster (1857–69), during the years at South Kensington (1870–85), at the Bethnal Green Museum (1885–95), as well as his planning towards the transfer of the collection to St Martin's Place in 1896. I consider the degree to which these varied exhibition environments curtailed or enabled Scharf's curatorial intentions and argue that the relative spaciousness of the South Kensington apartments gave him the opportunity to implement a rational hanging scheme in line with contemporary developments in art museum practice. Whilst contemplating the influence of Scharf's formative experience organizing art works at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857, I underline his later emphasis upon chronological display at the National Portrait Gallery and the creation of linear pathways through the gallery. In so doing, I also scrutinize the success of his attempts to shape visitor experience or regulate the consumption of the collection, and examine his participation in nineteenth-century debates concerning the type of museum public(s) such institutions intended to address. Chapter 5 investigates Scharf's efforts to maximize the NPG's educational potential via the physical display and interpretation of the collection. I look at Scharf's experiments in: visually grouping together related sitters, constructing a sympathetic environment for the presentation of historical portraits, and contextualizing likenesses

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<sup>24</sup> Zolberg, Vera, 'Conflicting Visions in American Art Museums', *Theory and Society*, 10, 1 (Jan. 1981), pp. 105–7, as cited by Halona Norton-Westbrook in *Between The 'Collection Museum' and The University: The Rise of the Connoisseur-Scholar and the Evolution of Art Museum Curatorial Practice, 1900–1940* (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2013), p.40.

through the adjacent display of both alternative images and autograph specimens. By additionally examining Scharf's programme of label writing and his expansion of the official collection catalogue according to a more scholarly model, I contend that Scharf considered his interpretative measures vital to the effectiveness of the Gallery's didactic purpose.

In these chapters I intend to at once illustrate the breadth of Scharf's professional activities, and to justify the hypotheses put forward in this Introduction. Five appendices transcribe manuscript and printed records from the Heinz Archive and Library, which are specifically relevant to the central themes of this study. They are included for the purpose of underlining the arguments made throughout. With this in mind, I also make extensive use of references to document supporting archival material, at the same time aiming to communicate to the reader something of the richness of this resource. The thesis thus functions as both a broad survey of Scharf's extensive career and an attempt to quantify his importance as a player within the nineteenth-century art and museum worlds. There are two aspects of his role that I purposefully do not introduce. One is Scharf's active interest in the care and restoration of collection objects, and consequently his part in the history of conservation at the National Portrait Gallery. The other is Scharf's production and accumulation of detailed tracings of British portraits - still preserved in the Gallery's archive (NPG7/1/3/2) - to aid his research and the practice of authentication. This is because both serve as current focuses for other scholars, and I therefore see no advantage in concurrently tackling the subjects here.<sup>25</sup> Undoubtedly, this thesis is ripe for further expansion and I look forward to future research that may build upon or challenge the ideas I put forth. The nature of my research project necessitated a central focus on the personal and official papers of George Scharf and the results of my analysis are undoubtedly coloured by Scharf's interpretation and mediation of events and successes. Though I try to counter this emphasis where possible, I remain mindful of the potential pitfalls of concentrating on the archive of one individual when formulating an understanding of his or her achievements, and the difficulties in thus offering a critical examination of professional conduct. I believe, nevertheless, that my work as it stands makes a worthy contribution to the ever-growing fields of museum studies, and studies in the history of collecting and display.

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<sup>25</sup> See forthcoming NPG website feature by Jacob Simon, on the history of conservation at the National Portrait Gallery (2018).

## Chapter 1

### A man of ‘unflagging zeal and industry’: George Scharf and the development of British historical portraiture studies

Applied by the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery in formally reporting the death of George Scharf in 1895, the above description indicates the strength of his commitment to his work over a career that spanned almost 40 years, following his appointment as Secretary (and later Director) in 1857.<sup>26</sup> As outlined in the Introduction, the remit of Scharf’s role - as custodian of the national portraits - was wide. Whilst he held responsibility for the display, interpretation and conservation of the early collection, he also devoted a significant amount of time to portraiture research. To this end, he directed the establishment of a research library of engraved portraits, periodicals, books and documents at the Gallery. Coupled with his meticulous investigations into works in numerous private and public collections across Britain, this served as a vital resource for authenticating potential portrait acquisitions. In recording what he saw by means of annotated sketches and detailed tracings, Scharf developed a procedure for the documentation, identification and authentication of portraiture that continues to inform the research practice of the Institution. In this chapter I examine the nature of Scharf’s engagement with his official duties and argue that his unremitting efforts resulted in the development of a set of professional standards, which served as a template for specialized research to be adopted and carried forward by his successors. I also consider how Scharf’s methodical approach contributed towards the wider development of art historical scholarship and the professionalization of museum practice in the second half of the nineteenth century, during a period that saw the emergence of a range of clearly defined, independent, professions.<sup>27</sup>

#### 1.1 The Scharf sketchbooks

From the moment George Scharf assumed his duties as first Keeper and Secretary of the National Portrait Gallery in October 1857, the diligence and enthusiasm with which he

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<sup>26</sup> Lionel Cust, 12 Sep. 1895, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1895*, p.4, HAL. For a full transcript of the Trustees’ ‘Tribute to the memory of Sir George Scharf, K.C.B.’, see Appendix I.

<sup>27</sup> On the development of a professional class in Britain during the 1800s see Harold James Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society 1780–1880* (London; Toronto: Routledge & K. Paul; University of Toronto P., 1969); and Harold James Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989).

pursued what was to be his life's work, is notable. Though his curatorial reputation had been sealed by way of his endeavours in sourcing and hanging the 'Ancient Masters' at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of the same year, it was to the development of a collection of British portraits representing the history of the nation that he focussed his energy for the rest of his career.<sup>28</sup> Scharf maintained a scholarly interest in Old Master paintings throughout his life, yet writing home from a rare international research trip to Paris in 1867 he was able to joke to William Smith - the Deputy Chairman of the Gallery Trustees - that he had declined an invitation to examine original drawings in the Exposition Universelle, instead remaining true to portraiture, his 'specialité'.<sup>29</sup> Essential to the acquisition of expertise in this field was Scharf's on-going programme to visually document portraits, either those investigated by the Board at Trustees' meetings, or those held in private collections across the country (fig. 1). He filled over 50 official Trustees' sketchbooks (TSBs) with closely annotated drawings, distinguishing these from his parallel series of personal sketchbooks (SSBs) as containing portraits brought to the Gallery for inspection or encountered during expeditions paid for by the government (fig. 2).<sup>30</sup> Between the dates of his tenure however, he also included in his personal sketchbooks invaluable information on British historical portraiture, gathered as part of a survey of country house collections undertaken at his own initiative. Those compiled over the length of his career number almost 100 and chart repeated visits to aristocratic homes, initially to study the artworks and then as favoured family guest, as was the case at Knole House, Blenheim Palace and Longford Castle.<sup>31</sup> Having travelled in Asia Minor and through Europe in his youth - and considering his interest in European art - the fact that the Paris visit remained his only foray abroad after his appointment to the NPG is, on the face of it, surprising. On a number of occasions friends enjoined him to accompany them on summer sojourns to France or Italy, yet always his response was that Gallery business or planned visits to country houses prevented him. Over and above financial restraints and an acknowledged fondness for London life, Scharf's reluctance rested on the fact that he

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<sup>28</sup> On the significance of Scharf's experiences at Manchester, see also Chapter 4.

<sup>29</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 2 Sep. 1867, NPG20/3, HAL.

<sup>30</sup> This includes extensive research into portraits of British sitters in the Royal Collection at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and Hampton Court; see TSBs NPG7/1/3/1/3/5-7 & 10-14, HAL. Other targeted collections included 'University Colleges' and 'Corporation Halls'; see George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 20 Jun. 1864 (printed copy), NPG20/2, HAL. For a full transcript of this letter, see also Appendix II.

<sup>31</sup> See NPG7/3/4/2/49-142, HAL. On the nature of Scharf's relationships with the owners of these houses, see also Chapter 3. Extended visits gave Scharf the opportunity to study these collections closely; his sketches are also interspersed with scenes of local landscape and incidents of family life. In addition, written notes on portraits in private collections functioned alongside his sketchbook drawings (see, for example, NPG7/1/3/3/1/7-14, HAL).

recognized these domestic collections as vital to his work and prioritized his familiarization with them above other interests. Whilst for his colleagues in other museums extended continental trips were essential for identifying and securing new acquisitions for the national collections, the specific orientation of Scharf's role focused his professional attention on the documentation of British art.<sup>32</sup> Writing to William Smith following an invitation to accompany him on a fortnight's trip to Paris through Normandy, his words exemplify a standard response:

I should indeed be glad to go under your wing to France but there is no chance this year of my getting abroad. I have still much to do in connection with the S. Kensington Exhibitions & this Blenheim visit will be my principal outing for the year. The Duchess [of Marlborough] wants me to make a long stay this time, they will have a succession of visitors and ducal living is very pleasant.<sup>33</sup>

Undoubtedly, the privileges Scharf enjoyed amongst aristocratic hosts also influenced the direction of his travel. The seamless linking between leisure and work was an attitude maintained by Scharf throughout his tenure. His diaries are full of accounts of spending long undisturbed periods sketching and making notes of pictures room by room, before joining the family to dine, or accompanying them on outings during the summer.<sup>34</sup> Even in the latter phase of his career, the draw of the country house collections remained strong. In a letter to his friend the German scholar and museum official Wilhelm von Bode, responding to an invitation to visit in 1882, Scharf concedes: 'There is for me little prospect of coming to Berlin. We have so many portrait treasures within our own shores, and many in places so little known and which I still hope to see, that all my holiday time is taken up in seeking & studying them'.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Other colleagues included Sir John Charles Robinson of the South Kensington Museum, Frederic William Burton of the National Gallery and Augustus Wollaston Franks of the British Museum. Yet unlike Burton, for example, Scharf held no executive power with regards to acquisitions; all new additions to the NPG's collection were instead subject to the approval of the Trustees; see Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, pp.75–6.

<sup>33</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 2 Sep. 1862, NPG20/3, HAL. See also William Smith to George Scharf, 16 Aug. 1862: 'I shall come back to London early in September...then cut off to Paris through Normandy. What do you say to joining me for a fortnight's trip? As everything is familiar to me, you will at least save the expense of a valet de place' (NPG7/1/1/4/2/5, HAL).

<sup>34</sup> For more on Scharf's movements within aristocratic circles, see Chapter 3.

<sup>35</sup> George Scharf to Wilhem von Bode, 29 Jan. 1882, IV/NL Bode 4777 (Scharf, George), ZSMB. On another occasion Scharf admits to Bode that financial restraints also hamper his ambitions for foreign travel: 'I fear that I must die before seeing Berlin, Dresden and Vienna...The Portrait Gallery ties me down too closely and I have nothing but my wretched salary to live upon, which in my position and the society I keep is very insufficient...but I ought to see the many English portraits at Vienna and all the Holbeins and Sir Ant: Mores everywhere' (George Scharf to Wilhem von Bode, 10 Jul. 1883, IV/NL Bode 4777 (Scharf, George), ZSMB).



Temporary exhibitions bringing together privately owned works were similarly important sites for research. Scharf was involved in a number of external projects, though all these inevitably fed back into his work for the National Portrait Gallery. The first occurrence was the 1857 Art Treasures Exhibition, for which he acted as Art Secretary. Although initially appointed to start at the NPG in May of that year, the Trustees granted him a leave of absence after the opening of the exhibition in order to study closely the pictures on display in the British Portrait Gallery (see Chapter 4).<sup>36</sup> Scharf was also on the organizing committee for the 1862 Special Loan Exhibition of works of the Medieval, Renaissance and later periods at the South Kensington Museum, which was intended as a counterpoint to the displays of modern manufactures in the International Exhibition on the other side of Exhibition road. In a letter to William Smith of that year Scharf hopes to get 'a little good time for seeing the South Kensington Exhibitions & making some serviceable notes'.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, his personal sketchbooks 63 and 65 are dotted with intricate studies of portrait miniatures, the loans of many of which he had helped to secure (fig. 3).<sup>38</sup> The three National Portraits Exhibitions staged by officers of the Science and Art Department at South Kensington between 1866 and 1868 also offered significant scope for research.<sup>39</sup> Having assisted in their preparation, he also carved out time to make detailed drawings of the exhibits, exclaiming in 1866: 'Thank goodness the Portrait Exhibition is over! I have worked at it early & late and devoted every moment that I could beyond this Gallery work, and yet I could have well gone on six weeks longer!'<sup>40</sup> Scharf augmented this pictorial documentation with written notes on the exhibited pictures, compiling notebooks containing colour details under such headings as 'eyeballs', 'eyebrows', 'hair', 'complex.', 'lips'.<sup>41</sup> His eagerness to accumulate new portrait information remained

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<sup>36</sup> See SSB 49, 1857, NPG7/3/4/2/59, pp.6–26, HAL.

<sup>37</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 15 Aug. 1862, NPG20/3, HAL. For Scharf's contribution to the exhibition, see also NPG7/2/8, HAL.

<sup>38</sup> The 1862 loan exhibition was closely associated with the activities of the Fine Arts Club (to which Scharf belonged before 1874) and many of its members served on the exhibition committee; see Eatwell, Ann, 'The Collector's or Fine Arts Club 1857–1874. The first society for Collectors of the Decorative Arts', *The Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850-Present*, 8, 1994, pp.28–9.

<sup>39</sup> As did the 1868 'National Exhibition of Works of Art' at Leeds, which Scharf visited in 1868; see TSB 14, NPG7/1/3/1/2/15, HAL). See also George Scharf to William Smith 21 Aug. 1868: 'To say the truth I have been very agreeably disappointed, for there is abundantly more to see [at Leeds] than I supposed, and the whole arrangement of the place is abundantly comfortable'; NPG20/3, HAL.

<sup>40</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 20 Aug. 1866, NPG20/3, HAL. See also 11 Aug. 1866: 'Everyday now I go & pursue my studies at the South Kensington Portrait Gallery...The number of things to look at is overwhelming'. On the National Portraits Exhibitions see SSB 78–80 (NPG7/3/4/2/89–91); and NPG7/2/4, HAL. On Scharf's involvement with the organization of the exhibitions, see also Chapter 2.

<sup>41</sup> See NPG7/2/4/3–5, HAL.

unwavering. Towards the end of Scharf's career and despite failing health, he made regular return trips to the consecutive historical exhibitions he had helped to organize at the New Gallery in Regent Street between 1889 and 1891, to sketch and make notes.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, bound into the front of his catalogue for the exhibition on the 'Royal House of Tudor' in 1890 are various lists of portraits 'to note & sketch'. A specific memo to 'Study Ears of Edward VI' in collected portraits arranged the South Gallery devoted to his reign, underlines the opportunity presented for comparative analysis between multiple representations of the same sitter.<sup>43</sup> The annual Old Masters exhibitions at the Royal Academy likewise provided ample potential for studying portraits on display. Scharf was a regular attendee of the private views and a repeated visitor to the shows during their run, his sketchbook a constant companion. The artist Henry Jamyn Brooks included Scharf in his large group portrait, *Private View of the Old Masters Exhibition, Royal Academy, 1888*, now in the National Portrait Gallery's collection. A composite scene comprising portraits of key figures associated with the late Victorian art world and those usually present at the pre-views of this exhibition, Scharf is shown standing in the background in characteristic pose with sketchbook open, absorbed in the act of note-taking (see fig. 4).<sup>44</sup>

The motivation for this documentary project likely stemmed from Scharf's background as an artist and an antiquarian.<sup>45</sup> His detailed studies attest to his skill as a draughtsman which, alongside a natural impulse to record what he saw, was fostered at an early age when accompanying his father - the artist and lithographer George Johann Scharf - on drawing expeditions around London and honed via formal training at the Royal Academy Schools. His early employment as an illustrator of artistic and archaeological texts surely consolidated his

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<sup>42</sup> These were exhibitions of the Royal House Stuart, the Royal House of Tudor and the Royal House of Guelph, respectively; see, for example, SSBs 118 and 120, NPG7/3/4/2/133 & 135, HAL. The Grosvenor Gallery Winter exhibitions were similarly useful, especially those on Reynolds (1884) and Van Dyke (1887).

<sup>43</sup> *Exhibition of the Royal House of Tudor, The New Gallery, Regent Street*, 1890 [annotated by George Scharf with correspondence & notes bound in], SL, HAL. Scharf's approach here is decidedly Morellian, although employed to assist in authenticating likenesses of Edward VI, rather than settling questions of artist attribution. On Giovanni Morelli's methodology, see below and nt. 111.

<sup>44</sup> NPG 1833. For more information on this portrait see Elizabeth Heath, *LVPC* entry NPG 1833; < <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitExtended/mw00049/Private-View-of-the-Old-Masters-Exhibition-Royal-Academy-1888>>, accessed 26 Mar. 2015. In 1894, Scharf began an index of portraits included in the Old Master exhibitions at Burlington House (also known as the Winter Exhibition); see George Scharf, personal diary, 22 Jun. 1894, NPG7/3/1/51, HAL. Yearly sections are bound in to the front of the Royal Academy catalogues, still in use in the NPG Library (Royal Academy of Arts (Great Britain) Winter Exhibition catalogues [annotated by George Scharf], HAL).

<sup>45</sup> Marcia Pointon compares Scharf to the graphic antiquarian George Vertue (1683–1756), renowned for his series of engraved heads after original portraits: 'What Vertue had begun as an obsessional private activity (though he came to earn his living by it), Scharf completed as a civil servant'; see Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p.227.

practice of close observation and of carefully delineating each element of his subject. An outstanding example from this period of his life is the English edition of Franz Kugler's seminal *Handbook of Italian Painting*, edited and translated by Sir Charles and Lady Elizabeth Eastlake and widely credited for contributing towards a popular interest in early Italian art in Britain. In Scharf's copy of the handbook are preserved letters from Charles Eastlake, in which he discusses which pictures to illustrate and praises the care and accuracy Scharf had bestowed.<sup>46</sup> When considering the large number of illustrations included in the text, the importance of their role within the publication is immediately evident. In order to translate his drawings into clear and readable engravings Scharf employed a necessary economy of line, drawing out the salient visual characteristics of the pictures he reproduced. Although the resulting engraved image was unable to indicate the tonalities of a painting – and thus attempt to emulate the appearance of the original – Scharf instead focused on its efficiency as a detailed compositional record, his preparatory drawings enunciating the formal aspects of a picture equally.<sup>47</sup> His professional status as an illustrator ceased in the 1850s yet Scharf continued to execute the illustrations reproduced as line engravings in a number of his own publications, for the remainder of his career.<sup>48</sup> I argue that these principles of delineation also informed his approach to the sketchbook drawings. An active Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries from 1852, his interpretation of portraits as historical documents is everywhere evident. Beyond his interest in capturing a sitter's facial features and pose, pictorial attention is also directed towards identifying characteristics such as costume, inscriptions, jewellery, insignias and heraldic devices. Indeed, Scharf's drawings bear the hallmarks of antiquarian illustration. Over and above attempts at mimesis, their central function is to record as much information about an object as possible. Often he would enlarge sections of interest or magnify details adjacent to the central image: inscriptions, signatures or particulars of features, clothing and coats of arms. These sketches, especially those executed directly in the service of the Trustees, are rational investigations into the likenesses they document, intended as useful and

<sup>46</sup> Charles Lock Eastlake ed., *The schools of painting in Italy, translated, from the German of Kugler by a lady, edited, with notes, by Sir, Charles L. Eastlake, P.R.A., F.R.S.*, 2.vols. (London: John Murray, 1851). For Scharf's copy see SL, HAL. The two letters from Eastlake are dated 12 Nov. 1850 & 27 Jan. 1851, and also included are a set of intricate tracings by Scharf titled 'First preparations for my Madonna Plates in Kugler'.

<sup>47</sup> In his discussion of the illustrated art book and the development of photo-mechanical processes of reproduction, Anthony Hamber notes the dominance of line engraving as a means of illustrating works of art in the first half of the nineteenth century and argues that the inability to indicate tonality and contrast was a central weakness of this method; Anthony J. Hamber, *"A Higher Branch of the Art": Photographing the Fine Arts in England, 1839–1880* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Pubs., 1996), pp.106–9.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, 'Observations on the Westminster Abbey portrait and other representations of King Richard the Second' by George Scharf, F.S.A, *Fine Arts Quarterly Review*, 1867 [bound copy] SL, HAL; and 'Remarks on a Portrait of the Empress Leonora in the possession of Earl Stanhope P.S.A', *Archaeologia*, vol. XLIII, 1870, pp.1–16.

accessible reference material. Writing on the traditional approach to illustrations in the society's publication *Vetusta Monumenta*, which was intended to form a permanent record of endangered British monuments, Maria Grazia Lolla perceptively notes that any effect of illusionism is repeatedly thwarted by intrusion into the space of the image of inscriptions, captions, cartouches and other pieces of texts. Rather than seeking to create a 'trompe l'oeil' effect, these images operated instead as improvements on written descriptions: '[b]y functioning as suggestive souvenirs of lost monuments they were self-consciously constructed as triggers to the imagination and aides to the memory' (see, for example, fig. 5).<sup>49</sup>

Together, Scharf's sketchbooks comprised a central resource to which he returned continuously to revise and enhance, and against which he would evaluate and authenticate potential acquisitions for the Gallery.<sup>50</sup> This can be most clearly seen through later notations added in pen, charting relevant authorities, exhibition catalogue references and sale details. The two series formed the core of his eventual bequest to the NPG, which also included a range of key publications from his own collection, heavily annotated and augmented, and containing his written cross-references to the sketchbook drawings.<sup>51</sup> An extract from Scharf's will transcribed in the Trustees' minutes specifies that the two were always to be kept together. This material, alongside other notebooks, annotated auction and exhibition catalogues, tracings and indexes, was to form part of the Gallery's wider library but was to be 'retained therein distinct and apart in a separate case or cases for the purpose of more convenient reference thereto'.<sup>52</sup> In so stipulating, Scharf underlines his intention to secure for future portraiture research this framework of go-to resources, which he had so carefully accumulated and shaped over the course of his career. Wilhelm von Bode, an occasional visitor to Scharf at home from 1879, recalls his 'embarrassing sense of order', which enabled

<sup>49</sup> Maria Grazia Lolla 'Ceci n'est pas un monument: Vestusta Monumenta and antiquarian aesthetics', in Martin Myrone and Lucy Peltz eds., *Producing the Past: Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice, 1700–1850* (Aldershot, Hants; Brookfield, VT.: Ashgate, 1999), p.20.

<sup>50</sup> Portraits in the Trustees' sketchbooks are accompanied by the number of the Trustees' meeting at which they were considered and the specific offer number for the picture as recorded in the Register of Offers; NPG85/2/1–10, HAL. Interestingly, the survival of a large metal trunk lettered in gold 'G. Scharf Private Books S.B. 1886' and used to store these precious resources whilst (presumably) at the Gallery, attests to the simultaneous value of Scharf's private sketchbooks, as an aid to his official undertakings (see NPG7/3/6/9, HAL).

<sup>51</sup> For example: Edward, Earl of Clarendon, *The history of the rebellion and civil wars in England*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1707–33) [annotated throughout with extensive notes], SL, HAL; Ralph Nicholson Wornum, *Some account of the life and works of Hans Holbein, painter, of Augsburg* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1867) [annotated with both bound and loosely laid in notes, correspondence and press cuttings], SL, HAL; *Catalogue of the art treasures of the United Kingdom collected at Manchester in 1857*, 3 vols. (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1857) [annotated with notes pasted in], SL, HAL.

<sup>52</sup> See minutes of the 210th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 9 May 1895, NPG 1/5, p. 174, HAL. This remains the case, although the Scharf Library and the Scharf Archive form two discrete categories of NPG holdings today.

him to find for this purpose any book in his specialized library or any place in his notebooks 'almost in the dark'.<sup>53</sup> Four years before his death Scharf was anxious to ensure that these tools for identification and verification were transferred for the benefit of his successors. Writing in his diary in 1891, he notes that alongside his private library in his rooms at 8 Ashley Place, 'I have now brought together all my sketches & sketchbooks from the earliest times...All the marked catalogues remain in the glass book-case in the small backroom. So that my executors will be guarded against confusion. I feel relieved by having done this'.<sup>54</sup> There are other indicators that towards the end of his life Scharf was thinking about his professional legacy. On 7 February 1890 he writes in his diary: 'making references to my SB [sketchbooks] in Tudor catalogue...Indexing my SB volumes that I had neglected since SB 116'.<sup>55</sup> Three indexes to the sketchbooks, compiled in the 1890s, are preserved amongst the Scharf papers. Two list the contents of each volume, whilst the third is ordered by both subject and location; here he has carefully cross-referenced the relevant sketchbook pages across both series.<sup>56</sup> Further items highlight Scharf's concern, above facilitating access to his own reference material, with putting in place a system for the continuation of his methodical approach to portrait research. This is evidenced in his 1894 design for a 'tabulated form' for use at the Gallery to record identifying details of pictures submitted for inspection. His suggested descriptive categories promote a standardized and consistent method for documenting portraits and include: 'artist, signature and date on picture, with any other inscriptions or monograms' and 'Whether full face, profile or seen in three quarters...Colour of eyes and hair'.<sup>57</sup> It is probable that this design served as the basis of a printed form that from 1897 was bound and used to record details of portraits examined by the Board. Ordered by Trustee meeting and largely including a photograph of the picture in question, these forms were

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<sup>53</sup> Wilhelm von Bode, *Mein Leben...* (Berlin: H. Reckendorf, 1930), p.173.

<sup>54</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 2 Aug. 1891, NPG7/3/1/48, HAL. Scharf recognized the value of his sketchbook material at an early point in his career and was eager to ensure its preservation. This is suggested by a letter from Edward Frankland, Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institution, who reports back his findings on the composition of Scharf's sketchbook paper: 'Dear Mr Scharf, I am happy to be able to allay your anxiety. The paper of your Note-books does not contain any Lead or any other substance which is affected by impure air. The enclosed sample has been exposed for an hour to an atmosphere of pure Sulphuretted Hydrogen without, as you perceive, being in the slightest degree affected. Your sketches will therefore endure as long as the paper on which they are drawn'; Edward Frankland to George Scharf (copy), 11 Nov. 1865, NPG7/3/5/2/1, HAL.

<sup>55</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, NPG7/3/1/47, HAL.

<sup>56</sup> See NPG7/1/3/1/1-3, HAL.

<sup>57</sup> George Scharf, 'Tabulated descriptive form of Portraits for Registration', Jan. 1894, NPG7/1/3/3/4/5, HAL. Scharf's headings encouraged the inclusion of particular details, e.g. 'Costume: main colour of dress, covering to neck, ruff, cravat or beard. Head-dress, chains or orders, stars, necklace, earrings, jewellery'.

implemented by Scharf's successor Lionel Cust and effectively replaced the Trustees' sketchbooks as an official record sequence.<sup>58</sup>

If this scheme appropriated the principles of the Trustees' sketchbooks, then a related project unquestionably built upon Scharf's efforts to codify portrait collections nation-wide in his personal sketchbooks. First proposed as early as 1862 and resurrected in expanded form by Scharf in 1893, the National Survey of Portraits – in actuality overseen by Cust from 1898 – sought to systematically record details of family pictures in lesser-known repositories:

Such palatial mansions of the Nobility as Wilton, Longford, Bowood, Longleat and Corsham are sufficiently well known and their contents have long been systematically recorded. But it is in the quiet smaller ministerial and family residences, collegiate institutions & endowed schools and municipal buildings that further treasures are to be looked for.<sup>59</sup>

Intended as a co-operative endeavour, Scharf drafted comprehensive Survey Return forms, to be populated by regional experts and enthusiasts and bound together as a national catalogue of portraits. In so doing he articulated his own methodology for documenting portraiture, arranging the required categories of information in order of relative importance, and proffering the fruits of his long experience making sketches and notes in the field.<sup>60</sup>

## 1.2 The question of authenticity

The historical significance of a portrait's subject governed the National Portrait Gallery's early acquisition policy, over and above concern with its artistic merit. Andrea

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<sup>58</sup> 'Description of Portraits submitted for inspection', 1897–1927; NPG87, HAL. It is likely that Scharf conceived his idea for a descriptive form without the inclusion of images. In some written notes under the title 'Suggestions for a Systematic method of Describing Portraits', he explains the importance of written descriptions: 'A Catalogue of Portraits, to be permanently useful, should contain not only a biographical account of each person represented, but a pictorial description of each painting so worded as not merely to assist the memory but even excite the imagination of those who have never seen the picture. By this means and by comparison with similar accounts, portraits in other localities may be identified' (8 Aug. 1893, NPG8/2/1, HAL). On Scharf's belief in the importance of portrait descriptions, see also Chapter 5.

<sup>59</sup> George Scharf (memo), Apr. 1893, NPG8/2/1, HAL. My thanks to NPG Senior Archive and Library Manager Bryony Millan (March 2015) for drawing my attention to this material and providing access to her previous work on the National Survey of Portraits. The idea for a national catalogue of portraits was first suggested in a letter of 1862 from the politician and author Sir George Cornwall Lewis, to the Chairman of Gallery Trustees Lord Stanhope. In a draft reply to Stanhope dated 30 Apr. 1862, Scharf declares his enthusiasm for the plan and points out: '[F]or a long while I have been collecting notes and records with a similar object' (see NPG8/2/1, HAL).

<sup>60</sup> In the final printed version, the form is identical to those employed to record information about portraits sent to the NPG for inspection; see NPG87, HAL. In the end the project remained uncompleted; the Gallery compiled just a small sequence of bound surveys of portraits in external collections (see NPG16 (1898–1919), HAL).

Geddes Poole notes that members of the Gallery's Board of Trustees were selected for their capacity to determine an individual's ranking within the history of the nation. Appointments were made by the Treasury not on the basis of connoisseurial skills or aristocratic titles, but according to a candidate's knowledge of 'history, public affairs, letters and science'.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the sourcing of genuine likenesses of celebrated figures was a central preoccupation and a mandate that Scharf took seriously from the outset. Geddes Poole proposes that in contrast to the National Gallery, where the Director was the expert, professional expertise at the National Portrait Gallery lay instead with the Trustees.<sup>62</sup> However I assert that whilst the Board members largely directed their energies towards assessing the importance of the sitter in a portrait, Scharf's particular expertise lay in his ability to establish its authenticity. This was a skill upon which the Trustees would become increasingly dependent (see Chapter 3) and in this regard, Scharf's professional opinion carried weight, despite the fact that he wielded no executive power when it came to accepting or rejecting a work.<sup>63</sup> Importantly, beyond transcribing the physiognomies of historical characters, portraits in the collection were to function as a set of 'visual primary sources'.<sup>64</sup> In discussing Thomas Carlyle's advocacy for a National Portrait Gallery of genuine likenesses, Paul Barlow explores his belief that authentic portraiture could serve as a means to link the past and present, arguing that this concern rested on the contemporary understanding that an image taken from life held the potential to position the onlooker metaphorically face to face with its subject: 'the suggestion that the viewer could in imagination stand in the place of the original artist as he had once looked at the sitter, and so travel back in time to the moment when the sitter lived'.<sup>65</sup> It is also necessary to consider this emphasis on authenticity in relation to a decidedly antiquarian turn identifiable in artistic and literary representations of the national past, from

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<sup>61</sup> Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, pp.30–3. See also, Chapter 3. Geddes Poole does concede that art experts (including portraitists John Everett Millais and George Frederic Watts) also served on the Board. From the 1880s the second Chairman Charles Stewart Hardinge actively promoted more selectivity with regards to the artistic calibre of acquisitions (see Chapter 4).

<sup>62</sup> See Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p.76.

<sup>63</sup> Lara Perry argues that Scharf's duties centred almost entirely on developing the expertise required to identify and authenticate portraits 'and to prevent errors in their identification on behalf of the Gallery and the wider world'; see Perry, 'Looking like a Woman', p.120.

<sup>64</sup> Barlow, 'Facing the Past and Present', p.221.

<sup>65</sup> Barlow, 'Facing the Past and Present', p.221. Julian North similarly explores Carlyle's argument that in revealing to the onlooker the authentic face and figure 'the portraitist could bring the sitter back to him as incarnated spirit' (see Julian North, 'Portraying Presence: Thomas Carlyle, Portraiture, and Biography', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 43, no. 03 (Sep., 2015), p.467), whilst Eileen Hooper-Greenhill discusses the contemporary idea of a 'tangible link' between viewer and individualized past, created through the medium of the authentic portrait (see Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.39).

the middle of the nineteenth century. Fostered by a surge of popular interest in British history, writers and artists sought to incorporate increasingly accurate historical details into their work.<sup>66</sup> The NPG itself was intended - and indeed continued to function - as a point of reference for artists working on historical subjects. Scharf's Secretary's journals record numerous instances of individuals calling by appointment to make notes and sketches after the portraits on display, to use as the basis for likenesses.<sup>67</sup>

With the application of this key criterion, the collection necessarily grew in an irregular fashion. Paul Barlow notes that it was the Trustees' very insistence on authenticity that prevented them from building a collection with a core of carefully chosen images. Instead, they 'had to pick up portraits as they became available, making decisions on an ad hoc basis'.<sup>68</sup> Accessions were thus made as and when suitable portraits were presented for donation or when opportunities arose on the art market (and providing sufficient purchase funds were obtainable), and in both instances pictures were thoroughly and cautiously vetted.<sup>69</sup> In a lecture given to the Royal Institution in 1866, Scharf maintains:

Unless implicit reliance can be placed on the authenticity of the likeness, a portrait becomes worthless. The soundness of claims to genuineness may be tested and authenticated in various ways; but especially by reference to pictures preserved in family mansions, historical descriptions, and by comparison to contemporary engravings of the best class, bearing inscriptions which afford both names and dates of the person represented and of the artist who painted the likeness.<sup>70</sup>

As early as 1860 Scharf was able to draw on information compiled in his sketchbooks for this purpose; his drawings are frequently accompanied by descriptions of eye colour, hair colour

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<sup>66</sup> For a comprehensive examination of this phenomenon see Rosemary Mitchell, *Picturing the Past: English History in Text and Image, 1830–1870* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 2000).

<sup>67</sup> See, for example, 2 Jun. 1892: 'Mr. Philip Calderon R.A. came by appointment to collect portraits for a picture of Archbishop Bourchier & the Queen of Edward 4th. & children'; NPG7/1/1/1/8, HAL.

<sup>68</sup> Paul Barlow, 'The Imagined Hero as Incarnate Sign: Thomas Carlyle and the Mythology of the 'National Portrait' in Victorian Britain', *Art History*, 17, no. 4 (Dec. 1, 1994), pp.520–1.

<sup>69</sup> In reality the Trustees also accepted portraits contemporary with a sitter's lifetime, in lieu of a known or available pictures from life. Artist's replicas were also acquired for this reason, although later copies after portraits were actively excluded. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill accounts for the presence of non-originals in the early collection as symptomatic of the Trustees' desire for representativeness; see Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.40.

<sup>70</sup> George Scharf, *Weekly evening meeting, Friday, March 2, 1866: on portraiture: its fallacies and curiosities as connected with English history* [transcript of Royal Institution lecture] (London: Royal Institution of Great Britain, 1866), p.2, copy HAL. The choice of this location for Scharf's lecture speaks of the clear parallels drawn between scientific and art historical research, during this period.



and skin tone, and intended as a practical template for comparison with alternative proposed likenesses of a sitter. Writing to Smith against the acquisition of a portrait of the essayist and poet Joseph Addison on sale with the picture dealer Henry Farrer, he certainly makes reference to his notes in recollection of this level of detail, despite an extraordinary memory:

I feel quite vexed to think that so capital a picture as the one I have just seen at Farrer's is so different from all the other portraits I have seen of him – meaning of course those which are known to be authentic...The portraits I remember are the Kit-Cat, Lord Northwick's, the Bodleian, Queens College Oxford and the one by Jervas at Knole...In no case among the Addison portraits named above is the nose so thin or so verging upon the aquiline as in the Farrer picture. Addison's nose is remarkably flat between the eyes. At Farrer's it rises at that very point. The colour of the eyeballs in the Queen's College picture is blue grey. In the Farrer picture it is brown-grey, if not decidedly brown. The colour of the eyebrows accords but the space of the flesh between the eyebrow and the eyelid is very different (fig. 6).<sup>71</sup>

In this case, Scharf's detailed comparison with other known portraits of Addison directly informed the Trustees' decision not to purchase the picture.<sup>72</sup> Although not always fool-proof in eliciting a genuine likeness, the results of this and other procedures were of fundamental service to the Board in the allocation of their annual purchase grant towards the acquisition of pictures for the national collection.<sup>73</sup> Regardless of the outcome, the documentation of recognized portraits referenced in the course of authenticating pictures offered to the Gallery, held lasting value. Scharf acknowledged the importance of this process: 'In many of these instances, whilst the pictures offered were declined as spurious, the Collection of the Trustees became enriched by tracings and careful records of the most genuine and authentic portraits known to exist'.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 21 Dec. 1860, NPG20/3, HAL.

<sup>72</sup> Despite valuing the Addison portrait 'on art grounds alone', Scharf concedes that because of these inconsistencies, the purchase of Farrer's picture would possibly leave the Gallery open to criticism: 'what I express privately other individuals with no friendly feeling may utter publically'; see George Scharf to William Smith, 21 Dec. 1860, NPG20/3, HAL. The portrait is listed in the Register of Offers as by 'Kneller', but it is the likeness, not the artist attribution, that is queried in this instance (see 20 Dec. 1860, XLIII 5, NPG85/2/1, HAL).

<sup>73</sup> This remained small, the yearly parliamentary provision not increasing during Scharf's tenure beyond £2000 (to cover acquisitions, wages and other Gallery costs), whereas the National Gallery's purchase grant alone fluctuated between £5000 and £10,000: see Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p.64.

<sup>74</sup> George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 20 Jun. 1864 (printed copy), NPG20/2, HAL. For a full transcription of this letter, in which Scharf outlines the extent of his official duties, see Appendix II. Scharf concedes here that his records of all portraits offered to the Trustees were also useful as a 'means of checking dealers and others from palming off the same picture more than once on the notice of the Board'.

The examination of related drawings and engravings was similarly an important element in this verification process. A picture suspected as a copy could be tested against a known print after the original, whilst the quality of a likeness could be established by means of comparison with engravings after other portraits contemporary with a sitter's lifetime. Information attained through the study of preparatory drawings or engraved reproductions could also confirm or discredit artist attributions and thus impinge upon the deliberations of the Board. In the early years of his career, Scharf was materially assisted in this task by William Smith, acknowledged expert in historical portrait engravings, and founding Trustee William Hookham Carpenter, Keeper of Prints & Drawings at the British Museum.<sup>75</sup> Trips to the Museum's print room and library to trace or make sketches for this purpose became his default course of action, as his personal diaries relate.<sup>76</sup> Scharf's working process is exemplified through his response to the offer of a portrait of the physician and chemist Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne attributed to Rubens, which can be traced via the NPG's institutional records.<sup>77</sup> On the morning of 21 November 1861 (the day of the Trustees meeting at which the picture was considered) Scharf visited the British Museum and made sketches of the artist's preparatory chalk and wash drawing for the portrait, and of a contemporary mezzotint after his finished work by John Simon.<sup>78</sup> Two days later Scharf made a detailed pencil study of the picture offered to the Gallery in his Trustees' sketchbook. His accompanying written notes surmise its status as a copy and describe it as 'freely but not forcibly painted. Evidently by some painter of the school of Rubens; but scarcely so masterly a hand as executed the sketch in the British Museum' (see figs. 7 & 7a). It is likely that Scharf's analysis combined, perhaps, with a prohibitive price - set at £150 - determined the Board's rejection of the offer.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> The relationship between Scharf, Smith, and Carpenter is discussed at length in Chapter 3.

<sup>76</sup> See, for example, George Scharf, personal diary, 3 Oct. 1859, NPG7/3/1/16, HAL; and 13 Jan. 1883 (NPG7/3/1/40, HAL).

<sup>77</sup> Messrs Chamberlain of High Holborn offered the portrait for sale: see Register of Offers, 12 Aug. 1861, L A4, NPG85/2/1, HAL.

<sup>78</sup> The original drawing by Rubens (c.1630) remains at the British Museum, 1860,0616,36, P&D, BM.

<sup>79</sup> To bolster his research Scharf also visited the Royal College of Physicians on the same morning to make a quick annotated sketch of an alternative portrait of Mayerne there; see George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 21 Nov. 1861, NPG7/1/1/1/1, HAL and TSB 6, p.40 (NPG7/1/3/1/2/6, HAL). Scharf and Smith investigated this portrait together and it is probable that both led the Trustees in their decision not to purchase the picture. £150 in 1861 equals approximately £12,600 in today's money.

The importance Scharf placed on engravings after portraits as comparative source material, is clearly demonstrated through his heavily annotated copy of James Granger's *Biographical History of England*, which he kept to hand in his office. Marcia Pointon asserts the usefulness of Granger's six volumes, which she argues remained the 'first measure and standard for matters of identification and authentication' of portraiture at the Gallery during Scharf's tenure.<sup>80</sup> Between the pages of this customized version - the same edition as that used for reference in the British Museum - Scharf bound in blank leaves, to which he added his own notes adjacent to the published lists of engravings after likenesses of the sitters featured within.<sup>81</sup> His written categories across the end grains, intended to enable quick access to sections: 'James I', 'Charles I', 'Foreigners', etc., attest to the utility of these volumes. Traditionally a stimulus for extra-illustration, Scharf's modified copy of Granger instead functioned as a springboard for further portrait research. His additions cross-refer to portrait authorities and to the page numbers of his sketchbook drawings after originals or after engravings examined in the BM print room, the Library of the Athenaeum Club and the private libraries of various country houses. Alongside pasted-in letters, drawings and tracings, these references form a dense repository of information gathered under the maxim inscribed by Scharf at the front of volume one: 'Portraiture, like History, forfeits the name when it ceases to be true'.<sup>82</sup> The accumulation of details of further portraits not listed by Granger, confirms the practicality of this modified publication as a touchstone for his investigations into authenticity. Joseph Strutt's *The Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of England* and James Planché's *History of British Costume*, for example, are frequently cited by Scharf and offer up additional portraits of British figures via engravings after the early manuscript illustrations they reproduce.<sup>83</sup> Roy Strong acknowledges both the revolutionary consequences of Strutt's work for the practice of

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<sup>80</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p.228. Marcia Pointon also notes that Scharf set his temporary clerk Goodison the task of marking engravings in the Gallery's reference portfolios when he found them listed in Granger; see George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 29 Jan. 1861, NPG7/1/1/1/1, HAL.

<sup>81</sup> The fact of this being the same as the British Museum's edition is noted in an inscription by Scharf on the title page; see Granger, Rev. James, *A Biographical History of England from Egbert the Great to the Revolution*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, vol.1 (London: Baynes, 1824) [annotated by George Scharf], HAL, front end paper.

<sup>82</sup> Granger, *A Biographical History of England* [annotated by George Scharf], HAL, front end paper. Scharf similarly annotated his 1835 edition of Edmund Lodge's *Portraits of illustrious personages of Great Britain* with copious notes on the plates, many gathered from the National Portraits Exhibition in 1866; see Edmund Lodge, *Portraits of Illustrious personages of Great Britain, engraved from authentic pictures in the galleries of the nobility, and the public collections of the country, with biographical and historical memoirs of their lives and actions*, 4 vols. (London: Harding and Lepard, 1835) [George Scharf's annotated copy], SL, HAL.

<sup>83</sup> See Joseph Strutt, *The regal and ecclesiastical antiquities of England* (London: John Thane, 1773) [annotated by George Scharf], HAL; and James R. Planché, *History of British Costume* (London: Charles Knight, 1834). The 1842 edition of Strutt's *regal and ecclesiastical antiquities* (with critical notes by Planché) is also in the NPG Library and is inscribed by Scharf 'N.P.G. 4<sup>th</sup> January 1867'.

accurate historic reconstruction in Victorian painting, and the role that Planché played in popularising the close study of historical costume to this end.<sup>84</sup> Whilst for Scharf the central value of these volumes lay in their accumulation of carefully replicated portraits from ancient sources, he likely also employed them in this further aspect of detective work, described in his Royal Institution talk:

Another important means to detecting error in the names and offices of the persons represented in portraiture, may be derived from the study of costume...In nearly all cases, painters unconsciously represented historical characters and events, however remote the times may have been, in dresses and ornaments peculiar to their own day. Even when some deviation was attempted, as in the portraits of our earliest kings, some minor details, such as the form of a cap, feather, construction of armour, buckles, or details of ornament, will be found to betray the real time when the painting was made. It is in this manner that portraits of...Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary as little girls in costumes of young ladies of the seventeenth century, lose all claim on our acceptance.<sup>85</sup>

Scharf's repeated study of historic costume as represented in authentic portraiture endowed him with the ability to both verify and discredit sitter identifications, and single out spurious claims to genuine likenesses. Others acknowledged Scharf's ability to apply such methods of analysis at an early stage. In a speech at the Royal Academy Banquet of 1866, the 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby responded to thanks for his instigation of the first National Portraits Exhibition at South Kensington, yet qualified the praise with the following admission:

Now, it is idle to deny with regards to the portraits exhibited...there are very few which can put forward any pretention to genuineness as portraits taken from the individuals they represent...the critical acumen, among others, of my friend Mr Scharf, who appears to have a personal acquaintance with all the nobilities of 200 or 300 years ago, and not only with their features, but with all the minutiae of their dress, will probably render it necessary, in more than one instance, to reconsider and revise the nomenclature which is attached to various portraits (A laugh).<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Roy C. Strong, *And When Did You Last See Your Father?: The Victorian Painter and British History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), pp.50–3.

<sup>85</sup> George Scharf, *Weekly evening meeting, Friday, March 2, 1866: on portraiture: its fallacies and curiosities as connected with English history*, p.4.

<sup>86</sup> Edward Smith-Stanley, 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby, transcript of speech in *The Times*, 7 May 1866, p.6. In fact, Scharf unsuccessfully attempted to secure an agreement with the Arundel Society to publish an alternative version to the official catalogue of the 1866 exhibition; see Edmund Oldfield to George Scharf, 11 Jan. 1867, NPG7/3/5/2/2, HAL. Instead, he offered his own critique of the exhibits in a pamphlet provided to the members of the Archaeological Institute during their 1866 London Congress, in which he lists by catalogue number the most noteworthy portraits, those in brackets indicating 'that the Picture, although deserving of observation, is not satisfactory'; see *Catalogue of the Special Exhibition of Portrait Miniatures on Loan at the South Kensington Museum, June 1865* (London: Whittingham and Wilkins, 1865) [copy pasted in front], SL, HAL.

Armed with this level of expertise Scharf was thus able to declare confidently to John Miller Gray, Curator at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, when reporting back to him on pictures for sale at Christies: 'The Henry Prince of Wales is an absurd picture, nothing like him in features & wanting the ribbon & indication of the Garter which he would never be without'.<sup>87</sup> Further letters to this correspondent demonstrate the value he placed on the detailed examination of costume as a research aid. In a letter of 1887 he sends Gray two extracts from his sketchbook drawings - apparently on request - carefully reproducing the style of shoe with raised soles worn by Henry Rich, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Holland and William, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Hamilton in two pictures from Blenheim Palace, first studied by Scharf almost 30 years previously (figs. 8 & 8a).<sup>88</sup>

As techniques for photographically reproducing oil paintings and other art works improved, Scharf increasingly used photographs to assist his portraiture research. He recognized the value of photography at an early date in its development. Commenting in 1858 on its potential to reproduce works of art in the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, he regrets the technical limitations of transferring coloured originals into black & white, but admits that 'whenever the original *does* clearly reveal itself the rendering is fact indeed'.<sup>89</sup> The possibilities for photo-mechanical reproduction certainly intrigued him. This is evidenced in a letter from the chemist Edward Frankland, who tested the durability of two such reproductions of Scharf's wash drawing of the portrait of Richard II at Westminster Abbey, at his request:

I have tortured your two photographs every way which seemed to me to imitate the "tooth of time", but, whilst as you will perceive, I have made some impression upon them by very violent measures, I have the strongest reason to believe that the proofs are quite as permanent as printer's ink. I think therefore, that you may confidently use the process for your illustrations.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>87</sup> George Scharf to John Miller Gray, 27 Jun. 1888 and 19 Sep. 1887; NG7/5/20/4 & NG7/5/18/7, NRS. For further information on Scharf and Gray's professional interaction see Chapter 2.

<sup>88</sup> The two were evidently comparing notes on portraits, see George Scharf to John Miller Gray, 1 Sep. 1887: 'You are quite right to remind me about the peculiar boots in one of the Blenheim portraits by Mytens. Henry E. of Holland has the raised soles as seen in the grey second Duke of Hamilton now in your Gallery'; NG7/5/18/6, NRS.

<sup>89</sup> As quoted by Elizabeth Pergam, who also examines difficulties found in photographing art works at this early stage in the development of the practice; see Elizabeth Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857: Entrepreneurs, Connoisseurs and the Public* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), p.124 & pp.119–26. These namely concerned the inability to efficiently translate the tonal modulations of oil paintings.

<sup>90</sup> Edward Frankland to George Scharf, 11 Feb 1867 (copy), inserted into a volume in Scharf's Library: see *Printed Papers and Pamphlets, 1867* [correspondence and separate publications bound in, with annotations by George Scharf], SL, HAL. It is clear that Scharf was experimenting with a cutting edge process of photomechanical reproduction (possibly an early form of carbon printing) for illustrations in one of his publications. The letter

Photographs of portraits can be found throughout Scharf's papers, inserted into sketchbooks, included amongst correspondence or bound into exhibition catalogues and other volumes in his library. It is interesting to note the presence of photographic proofs in some of his sketchbooks from the early 1860s, pasted-in directly opposite his corresponding sketch of the same portrait. At this stage photographs are supplements to, rather than replacements for, Scharf's annotated drawings. Beyond the obvious advantages of copious colour notes, the latter could still offer clearer and more abundant information on details of form and composition (fig. 9). By the 1880s however, he is confident enough to utilize photographic images as a direct method of comparison between portraits. This was occasionally undertaken in situ, when he would bring along photographs to contrast against pictures hanging on the walls of an exhibition or auction house. It was useful, for example, for his on-going research into authentic portraits of Mary Queen of Scots. When visiting the exhibition staged for her 1887 tercentenary in Peterborough, Scharf notes in his diary for 14 September: '[t]ook my opera glasses & the newly bought photograph of the Windsor Mary Queen of Scots to compare with the Blair[s] one'.<sup>91</sup> In her examination of the role of photography in the development of art historical scholarship and its methodologies, Dorothea Peters notes its simple and fundamental benefit of making the remotest collections accessible without the need for travel.<sup>92</sup> Scharf indeed took advantage of this when undertaking his research, as he makes clear in a letter of July 1889 to Charles Hercules Read of the British Museum, in reference to the actions of his friend (and Read's superior at the museum) Augustus Wollaston Franks: 'I received this afternoon from Paris...a photograph from a drawing of Mary Queen of Scots in the Bibliotheque [Nationale], which I was very anxious to obtain. This I owe to the kind exertions of Franks...When you are writing to Franks will you please tell him how greatly I am obliged to him and how very successfully the thing has come out'.<sup>93</sup> It is not clear whether

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concludes: 'P.s I ought perhaps to have mentioned that there is no similarity whatever between these proofs & ordinary photographic prints. The latter would have been utterly destroyed by tests which produces scarcely any effect upon the former'.

<sup>91</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 14 Sep. 1887, NPG7/3/1/44, HAL. In the 1880s, Scharf also made sketches after photographs as he would from an engraving; see for example SSB 114, NPG7/3/4/2/129, pp.15 & 18, HAL. During this period Scharf employed photography to record details of the large group portrait, *The Fine Arts Commissioners, 1846*, which was rapidly disintegrating through the effects of bitumen [NPG 342]; see minutes of the 168<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 20 Nov. 1883, NPG 1/4, p.61, HAL. This remains the only visual record of the finished oil. See also, nt. 586.

<sup>92</sup> Dorothea Peters, 'Reproduced Art: Early Photographic Campaigns in European Collections' in Andrea Meyer and Bénédicte Savoy eds. *The Museum Is Open: Towards a Transnational History of Museums, 1750–1940* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), p.47.

<sup>93</sup> George Scharf to Charles Hercules Read, 26 Jul. 1889, Departmental Correspondence, BEP, BM.

this was a different portrait from the two drawings of Mary by François Clouet in the Bibliothèque Nationale, which were photographed by Braun & Co. 'expressly' for inclusion in the New Gallery's Stuart Exhibition earlier that year.<sup>94</sup> Both reproductions were thereafter presented by Scharf to the NPG and were unusually accessioned directly into the Gallery's collection rather than finding a place in the reference portfolios, thus underlining the value attached to this material as a means of facilitating both research and comparative display.<sup>95</sup>

Beyond pursuing his own official endeavours, Scharf identified the potential of the Gallery itself as a centre of research for the study of British historical portraiture. He had anticipated Lord Derby's suggestion to the Trustees in 1860 that the National Portrait Gallery begin collecting photographs of the best examples of portraits in private hands, in lieu of unobtainable originals.<sup>96</sup> In a letter to Lord Stanhope, the first Chairman of the Board, Scharf describes his efforts to gather materials to this end: 'We have already commenced (not for framed exhibition but for our portfolios & for reference) a collection of photographs and engravings from authentic portraits...Several photographs from the portraits recently exhibited in the Aberdeen collection of Scottish worthies were contributed to our portfolios by the Secretary and biographical publications begin to find their way to our shelves'.<sup>97</sup> This formed the nucleus of a research library, which was strengthened the following year through the donation of over 800 British portrait engravings compiled by Henry Witte Martin.<sup>98</sup> In

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<sup>94</sup> See Register of Offers, 30 Apr. 1889, CLXXXVII F2-3, NPG85/2/5, HAL. In the later nineteenth century, French photographer Adolphe Braun and his sons specialized in photographing works of art; see Naomi Rosenblum, 'Reproducing Visual Images', in Maureen O'Brien and Mary Bergstein eds., *Image and Enterprise: the photographs of Adolphe Braun* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), pp.40-43. On Braun's reproductions of drawings, see also Peters, 'Reproduced Art', pp.51-3.

<sup>95</sup> NPG D21633 & D21634. I have found no evidence to suggest that these were actually displayed in the Gallery. As a general rule, photographs were not accepted into the main collection until the twentieth century. Both were transferred to the NPG's archive collection from the primary collection, in 2006. See also Perry, *Facing Femininities*, p.109, nt. 67.

<sup>96</sup> See minutes of the 37th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 17 Feb. 1860; NPG 1/1, p. 117, HAL. See also letter from Edward Smith-Stanley to Philip Stanhope (12 Feb. 1860, U1590/C362/10, KHL) in which Derby also suggests the idea for the National Portraits Exhibitions of 1866-8.

<sup>97</sup> George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 28 Feb. 1860 (draft), NPG7/1/1/3/3, HAL. As an institution, however, the NPG did not systematically collect reference photographs of portraits during Scharf's tenure, as it did engravings. Moreover, although its administrators engaged with photographers and requests to photograph the collection on an ad hoc basis, the Gallery was more aligned with the conservative attitude of the National Gallery towards the medium, in contrast to the progressive policies of the South Kensington Museum; see Hamber, *"A Higher Branch of the Art"*, pp.333-461.

<sup>98</sup> See minutes of the 50th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 21 Nov. 1861, NPG 1/1, p. 158, HAL. There is evidence of Scharf's continued efforts to enhance the reference collection, including a letter in the Society of Antiquaries' archive in which he enquires after 'Historical Prints' engraved by George Vertue: '...these prints are now somewhat difficult to be met with and many of them are extremely useful with regard to identifying portraiture, and spare

response to Derby's proposal, Scharf drafted an ambitious scheme outlining his vision for the wider collection. Secondary to the acquisition of authentic portraits of significant individuals, group scenes depicting important historical events could offer broader instruction in British history, whilst examples of pictures executed by celebrated portraitists would showcase excellence in technique, without reference to the sitter.<sup>99</sup> In addition, Scharf advocates the collecting of supporting materials to assist with portrait authentication, identification and attribution, and provide practical examples for the study of historical costume. Alongside '[b]ooks for historical and biographical reference and engravings from authentic portraits' he proposes, instead of photographs, a series of exact artists' copies carefully replicating the condition of prized family pictures.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, illustrations after pictures from each period of history could afford 'for the benefit of artists, costume, character and ornaments, and display the physiognomy or countenances of the time even where the names of the personages are no longer known with certainty'.<sup>101</sup> Although there is no evidence that this or other elements of the scheme were pursued with deliberation, echoes of Scharf's intent can nonetheless be identified in the resources for the study of British portraiture comprising the Gallery's Heinz Archive and Library today, not least the sitters, artists and costume boxes, which remain fundamental to research activity in this field.

### 1.3 Scharf as museum professional

Scharf's methodical approach to research, whereby authenticity was established on a case by case basis through painstaking comparison with other known portraits of a sitter, aligns him closely with those principles of art historical scholarship pioneered by German academics in the middle of the nineteenth century. Frank Herrmann notes that the critical examination of painting was given a substantial push forward in Britain by the visits of Johann

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duplicates would be of much service in our portfolios'; George Scharf to Charles Knight Watson, Correspondence to the Society, 1866 (Scharf), SAL. The reference library was seemingly open to visitors by prior arrangement. See, for example: 'Mr E[dward] Armitage came by appointment & spent the day in looking though & making notes of Engraved portraits for his Crabb Robinson composition'; George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 24 Apr. 1869 (NPG7/1/1/1/2, HAL).

<sup>99</sup> George Scharf's 'scheme' detailing 'The objects of the N.P.G.', 12 Mar. 1860 (draft), NPG7/1/1/3/3, HAL. For a full transcript of the scheme, see Appendix III.

<sup>100</sup> Scharf certainly saw a distinction between his personal library and the Gallery's official library, which he endeavoured to enhance. For example, he presented a copy of his 1865 catalogue of the pictures at the Society of Antiquaries to the NPG, inscribed: 'For the library of the National Portrait Gallery from the writer' (copy HAL).

<sup>101</sup> George Scharf, 'The objects of the N.P.G.', 12 Mar. 1860 (draft), NPG7/1/1/3/3, HAL. See also, Appendix III.



David Passavant and Gustav Waagen, the latter establishing a technique for the scientific analysis of a picture in relation to the rest of an artist's oeuvre that was advanced greatly by Charles Eastlake at the National Gallery and other museum officials.<sup>102</sup> Scharf was certainly familiar with their work and knew both men personally.<sup>103</sup> He came into professional contact with Waagen when organizing the comprehensive display of casts of antique sculpture at the re-opened Crystal Palace in 1854 and as Art Secretary for the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition three years later, which took its name from Waagen's groundbreaking survey of art in English collections.<sup>104</sup> Elizabeth Pergam argues that in written commentary concerning the exhibition, Scharf on a number of occasions critiques Waagen's methods and conclusions, indicating 'the shifting direction that practitioners of art history were beginning to take' towards an academic rigour at odds with Waagen's approach.<sup>105</sup> However, I contend that Scharf's methodology was essentially aligned with that of his eminent peer yet, whilst acknowledging his debt to Waggen, he sought to consolidate his position as a scholar by applying a higher degree of precision to his research.<sup>106</sup> Francis Haskell praises Scharf's selection and arrangement of the Old Masters at Manchester, which he calls a 'German exhibition', asserting that this was the first show of its kind 'to have been directed by qualified experts open to the influence of German erudition and connoisseurship'.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, Scharf's lasting friendships with these men and other European academics, including Wilhelm von Bode and the classical art historian Adolf Michaelis, would have ensured a continued awareness of developments in continental scholarship.<sup>108</sup> James Sheehan identifies the second half of the

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<sup>102</sup> Frank Herrmann, *The English as Collectors; a Documentary Chrestomathy*, (New York: Norton, 1972), p.34.

<sup>103</sup> A note from William Smith reporting on a trip to Germany, hints towards the nature of Scharf's friendship with Passavant: '...Passavant was at Leipzig collecting the final proofs of his work, so that I could only leave the books with your love'; William Smith to George Scharf, 21 May 1858, NPG7/1/1/4/2, HAL. Scharf kept a carte-de-visite of the elder scholar in his album of 'Distinguished Persons'; see NPG Ax29941.

<sup>104</sup> See Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain: being an account of the chief collections of paintings, drawings, sculptures, illuminated mss., &c.* (London: John Murray, 1854), English edition.

<sup>105</sup> Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, pp.146–7.

<sup>106</sup> For an account of Scharf's hang of the 'Ancient Masters' at Manchester and on his self-positioning within the art historical field, see also Chapter 4. The New York Public Library holds Scharf's copy of the English edition of Waagen's *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, which is dedicated to him by the translator, Lady Elizabeth Eastlake. A letter from Scharf to John Murray tipped in (16 Mar. 1855), cites numerous errata and inaccuracies in the text, whilst his inclusion of letters, clippings and annotations (based on his first-hand knowledge of English country house collections) effectively produces an unpublished and enlarged second edition.

<sup>107</sup> Francis Haskell, *The Ephemeral Museum: old master paintings and the rise of the art museum* (London: YUP, c.2000), p.85.

<sup>108</sup> Michaelis stayed with Scharf at Ashley Place for an extended period four times between 1861 and 1883, whilst undertaking research in England. The two men kept up correspondence until the end of Scharf's life; see NPG7/3/1/18 & 30 and NPG7/3/5/1/5, HAL. Names of German academics that also reoccur in Scharf's diaries,

1800s as the point at which art history in Germany acquired its disciplinary character, when scholars began in earnest to assemble information about artists, catalogue their work and develop 'a methodology for settling problems of attribution'.<sup>109</sup> In post at the NPG, Scharf tailored his own scientific impulse to the Gallery's founding acquisition policy, thus directing his time and expertise towards validating likenesses rather than verifying artist attributions.<sup>110</sup> In fact, given Scharf's persistent accumulation of visual information and its use in authenticating portraits through comparative analysis, it is possible to liken his approach to Giovanni Morelli's particular brand of 'scientific connoisseurship', though this was exclusively employed by the latter to resolve questions of authorship.<sup>111</sup> Although Italian by birth, formative years spent in Germany and France ensured that Morelli, through his work, continued to act as a 'conduit for the intellectual traditions of the north'.<sup>112</sup> Scharf's diaries confirm that he kept abreast of his contemporary's writings on art; he notes in May 1892, for example, that he is 'Reading Morelli', though he criticises the author's tendency to ridicule his rival Bode and other 'Keepers of Galleries'.<sup>113</sup>

I do not attempt here, however, to suggest that Scharf's specialism was limited to authentication, over attribution. Certainly by the 1880s Scharf's status as a connoisseur of British portrait painting, secured not least through his comprehensive exposure to examples of the genre, was widely acknowledged and frequently called upon. As an influential member of the organizing committees for the New Gallery's Stuart, Tudor and Guelph exhibitions (1889–91) for instance, Scharf advised colleagues on the inclusion and rejection of portraits, serving

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correspondence and papers include: Theodor Panofka, Carl Justi, Hugo von Tschudi, Alfred Woltmann and Karl Woermann. Scharf's library contains bound presentation essays inscribed by these individuals and others, such as Otto Jahn and Alexander Conze.

<sup>109</sup> James J. Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World from the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of Modernism* (New York: OUP, 2000), p.89.

<sup>110</sup> This policy privileged the sitter over the artist: 'Artistic merit is no test for admission of a portrait into the National Portrait Gallery. What is required is that it should be authentic, and that it gives a fair representation, as far as can be ascertained, of the features of the original'; Anon., 'The National Portrait Gallery', *Quarterly Review*, Apr. 1888, p.358.

<sup>111</sup> On Morelli's method, see Richard A. Wollheim, 'Giovanni Morelli and the Origins of Scientific Connoisseurship', in *On Art and the Mind: Essays and Lectures* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), pp.177–203.

<sup>112</sup> See Lee Sorensen, 'Morelli, Giovanni', *Dictionary of Art Historians*; <https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/morellig.htm>, accessed 18 Aug. 2016.

<sup>113</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 19 May 1892, NPG7/3/1/49, HAL. It is likely that Scharf was reading Constance Ffoulkes's translation of Morelli's work into English, published that year; see Giovanni Morelli, *Italian Painters: critical studies of their works*, vol. 1, trans. Constance Jocelyn Ffoulkes (London: John Murray, 1892). On Morelli's conflict with other European art historians during his lifetime, see Udo Kultermann, *The History of Art History* (New York: Abaris Books, 1993), pp.106–111.

as 'the general referee and court of final appeal in questions of a disputed attribution'.<sup>114</sup> His diary entry for 19 December 1889 exemplifies his command of the subject: 'To the Tudor exhibition soon after lunch at the office & stayed till 6. My first visit. Pointed out several pictures not worthy of a place on the wall'.<sup>115</sup> Yet this weight of accumulated experience did not necessarily entail a dispassionate response to his subject. A journalist for the *Star*, writing in 1889 on Scharf and 'Portrait Painting' observes the 'twinkle in his eye which tells you he can admire the beauty patch on the cheek of a Cosway miniature or detect the false colours of an ascribed Gainsborough Duchess'.<sup>116</sup> The following fond and humorous anecdote recorded by the Duchess of Radnor, whom Scharf assisted with cataloguing the collection at Longford Castle in the same year, reveals his capacity to respond emotionally and intuitively to a work of art:

From some muscular weakness, his chin had a peculiar way of resting in his chest; and, whenever he wanted to look at a picture, he would hold his head up with his hand. I can see him now, standing before the picture of the Countess of Monmouth (by Van Dyck), holding up his chin, and gazing at the picture with all his heart in his eyes. Then his chin dropped down, and he walked away, murmuring 'A dream of beauty, a *dream* of beauty!'<sup>117</sup>

Acting on behalf of the Gallery however, Scharf's practice was unfailingly disciplined and rational, his decisions evidence-based and guided by an established procedure for authentication. As Lara Perry maintains, in his official capacity, Scharf practised a 'connoisseurship of antiquarianism' over a 'connoisseurship of aesthetics'; visual evidence was always corroborated through the use of bibliographical and other documentary sources (as discussed in the above section).<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Anon., 'Death of Sir George Scharf', *The Times*, 20 Apr. 1895, p.7.

<sup>115</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 19 Dec. 1889, NPG7/3/1/46, HAL. On Scharf's involvement with the New Gallery exhibitions, see NPG7/2/7/1&2, HAL. By September 1891 this working relationship had deteriorated: 'I have utterly broken with [Joseph Comyns] Carr and [Charles Edward] Halle [of the New Gallery] for having foisted so many unauthentic portraits into, & excluded genuine ones from the best places in the Guelph Exhibition'; George Scharf to John Miller Gray, 24 Sep. 1891, NG7/5/36/25, NRS.

<sup>116</sup> Anon., 'Portrait Painting', *The Star*, 12 Mar. 1889 (cutting), NPG7/3/5/2/4, HAL.

<sup>117</sup> Helen Matilda Chaplin Radnor, *From a Great-Grandmother's Armchair* (London: Marshall Press, 1928), p.179, original emphasis.

<sup>118</sup> Perry, *Facing Femininities*, pp. 110 & 115. In this sense, it is arguably more accurate to align Scharf's scholarship with the approach of contemporaries Sir Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, whose surveys of historical art were the first written in English to make use of documentary evidence and research. Scharf employed Cavalcaselle as an illustrator in the 1850s, and he read the work of both men throughout his life; see, for example, George Scharf, personal diary, 11 Mar. 1883 & 15 Mar. 1885, NPG7/3/1/40 & 42, HAL.

James Sheehan further pinpoints an 'elective affinity between art history and the museum' in Germany, with many of the first art historians also being museum staff.<sup>119</sup> Likewise in Britain art museums long functioned as central sites for the formation of a discipline that did not achieve institutional legitimacy until the twentieth century.<sup>120</sup> During the later Victorian period a 'systematic turn' can be identified which, according to Christopher Whitehead, can be linked to the growing professionalization of curators who sought to distinguish themselves from their 'amateur' or 'dilettante' predecessors.<sup>121</sup> Whitehead further contends that the claim to rigorousness by nineteenth-century museum officials was reflected in the deliberate adoption of scientific terminology that extended beyond scholarship, to encompass attitudes towards the display and acquisition of museum objects. In picture galleries this was reflected in the drive to situate art within its historical framework.<sup>122</sup> The logical arrangement of paintings according to period and school, championed by Waagen and first implemented in Britain at the National Gallery, was designed to illustrate the complete history of western art.<sup>123</sup> Emphasis thus shifted to the acquisition of works as 'specimens' or examples to fit into a representative scheme.<sup>124</sup> Comparable to articulating the evolution of art through a selection of paintings by the central European masters, the National Portrait Gallery attempted to present a linear narrative of British history via portraits of its chief protagonists. As the collection achieved a degree of comprehensiveness and the Gallery's exhibition spaces gradually expanded, the chronological ordering of the pictures became one of Scharf's enduring concerns. He strove to accommodate all portraits within a rational programme, grouping works under the reign of successive monarchs and encouraging the sequential progression of visitors through the galleries (see Chapter 4).

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<sup>119</sup> Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World*, p.90.

<sup>120</sup> Art history as an academic discipline would not become truly established in Britain until the founding of the Courtauld Institute in 1932. On this and the Slade Professorships at Oxford and Cambridge, see Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p.20. See also Elizabeth Mansfield ed., *Art History and its Institutions: foundations of a discipline* (London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>121</sup> Christopher Whitehead, *Museums and the Construction of Disciplines: Art and Archaeology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Duckworth, 2009), p.66.

<sup>122</sup> Scharf's chronological hang of Old Master paintings at Manchester is evidence of his adherence to this principle at mid-century (see Chapter 4).

<sup>123</sup> Though this approach based on the German model came to dominate museum arrangement in Britain in the nineteenth century, Nick Prior reminds us that the principle of chronological display has its roots in eighteenth-century France, specifically developments at the Louvre; see Nick Prior, *Museums and Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture* (Oxford: New York, NY : Berg, 2002), p.33.

<sup>124</sup> Whitehead, *Museums and the Construction of Disciplines*, p.67.

Despite a lack of overt evidence confirming Scharf's deliberate engagement with developments in art historical scholarship or the systematic arranging of collections, I contend that the rigour he applied to research and the nature of his specific curatorial interventions at the Gallery, positioned him in league with fellow museum practitioners each resolutely working to their own agenda, yet together carving out the very tenets of their profession.<sup>125</sup> This occurred during a phase of wider occupational rationalization and reform. Philippa Levine writes of a 'dynamic of professionalization as characteristic of events of this period', with many new middle class professions emerging at mid-century, as well as the expansion of the three established professions of law, divinity and medicine.<sup>126</sup> In his examination of the rise of the professional classes in nineteenth-century Britain, W. J. Reader asserts that by the close of the century, the standing of the professions had been raised and consolidated, noting the 'rich complexity' of Victorian professional classes as reflected in the census reports of 1861 and 1881.<sup>127</sup> Within each, codes of conduct and notions of professional etiquette were steadily developed; in the museum sector this emphasis was formalized through the establishment of the Museums Association in 1889.<sup>128</sup> It is necessary here to underline the relatively late date at which guidelines for professional art museum practice were officially enshrined and acknowledge the difficulties in arguing for professionalization in a sector that for much of the nineteenth century was characterised by extensive amateur involvement and patronage. In light of this I position Scharf as a pioneer professional who across the course of his long career formulated systems for Gallery practice and originated standards for portraiture research, to be adopted and expanded by those who succeeded him. Operating amongst a relatively small number of professional peers, Scharf thus contributed significantly to the growth of professional practice in the museum, which in turn paved the way for professionalization within the sector throughout the twentieth century.<sup>129</sup> In both censuses, Scharf is described

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<sup>125</sup> On the notion of professional exchange and collaboration between Scharf and his colleagues in the nineteenth-century museum world, see also Chapter 2.

<sup>126</sup> Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians, and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838–1886* (Cambridge; New York: CUP, 1986), p. 124.

<sup>127</sup> William Joseph Reader, *Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p.146.

<sup>128</sup> On the Museums Association see Geoffrey Lewis, *For Instruction and Recreation: A Centenary History of the Museums Association* (London: Quillier Press, 1989). I have not found any evidence of Scharf's involvement with the association, either its establishment in 1889 or as an early member.

<sup>129</sup> Halona Norton-Westbrook notes the beginnings of professionalization amongst museum officials in Britain towards the end of the 1800s, using as an example Scharf's efforts to implement standards of identification and documentation; see Norton-Westbrook, *Between The 'Collection Museum' and The University*, p.53. In fact, Scharf had only one direct official counterpart: John Miller Gray of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. Scharf's interactions with Gray and comparable colleagues in different institutions are explored in Chapter 2.

principally as a member of the 'Civil Service', before the designation 'Keeper & Secretary', yet he was careful to nurture those special qualifications that equipped him for the specificities of his role. Scharf's possession of a particular skill set is underlined in the following letter from his colleague Frederic William Burton, penned in response to the former's candidature for compulsory retirement over 65, as decreed by the Treasury in 1892 (see also, Chapter 3):

The rule was made no doubt to appease the humours of uneasy young Govt. officials impatient of slow promotion. But for "symmetry's sake" it was extended to Civil Servants *entirely out of that category* – as those in the departments of Art and Science. The absurdity of making this general is patent. Clerks can be had by the hundreds and thousands. But to dismiss a man who either by native genius or by long and laborious study is specially qualified for a particular post merely because he has reached an artificially fixed age, is simply to lower the power of his department.<sup>130</sup>

The requirement for a certain level of specialized knowledge was likewise extended to other Gallery employees. Following the sudden death of his special clerk and assistant Laurence Gifford Holland in 1893, Scharf suggested that applicants to replace him be subjected to a more rigorous examination than was usually necessary to adequately fill government clerkships.<sup>131</sup> Holland had proven especially proficient in matters of history and portraiture; he had therefore been trusted by Scharf to inspect pictures for their suitability as acquisitions and conduct his own portrait research, in addition to undertaking more traditional secretarial tasks.<sup>132</sup> Levine notes a similar attitude amongst staff of a larger government department, which similarly rejected the Civil Service principle of discouraging special qualification prior to general entry. The particular training required for the expert duties of the Public Record Office clerks enabled them to take ownership of their profession, securing unusual attributes 'which they themselves recognised as a symbol of their uniqueness within the service'.<sup>133</sup> Despite his background as an artist, Scharf cannot easily be cast in the mould of the 'painter-connoisseur' Director, as ascribed by Andrea Geddes Poole to consecutive incumbents of the National Gallery's post during the nineteenth century. Rather, he is more closely aligned with the meticulous 'curator-scholar' model epitomized by Sidney Colvin and his followers at the British

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<sup>130</sup> Frederic William Burton to George Scharf, 6 May 1892, NPG7/1/4, HAL, emphasis mine.

<sup>131</sup> See minutes of the 204th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 23 Nov. 1893, NPG 1/5, p. 94, HAL.

<sup>132</sup> Holland assisted Scharf with his work for the Gallery between 1883 and 1893. The NPG holds 14 volumes of his own notebooks and sketchbooks relating to British portraiture: see MS 138-151, HAL.

<sup>133</sup> Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, p. 124.

Museum, in the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>134</sup> Though whilst these men were university educated, Scharf honed his expertise 'on the job' and in the direct service of the National Portrait Gallery.

But how may Scharf be characterized as a professional man? In her analogous examination of the rise of painting as a profession in the nineteenth century, Paula Gillett charts a revolutionary change to the social status of artists from the 1860s, crediting a large part of their success to the 'exemplification by painters of one belief central to the Victorian ethos, that a person's moral worth is shown in unswerving and unremitting industry in his chosen field of work'.<sup>135</sup> This 'religion of work' came in fact to be the actual faith of many individuals during a period of significant religious doubt and increasing secularization.<sup>136</sup> Tim Barringer examines at length the potency of the concept of work during the 1800s, considering the 'redemptive potential' of labour (both manual and intellectual) and its association with divine revelation.<sup>137</sup> Certainly, Scharf was a keen adherent to the Victorian gospel of work. As evidenced in this chapter, his dedication to his role is unquestionable. A confirmed bachelor, his official responsibilities always took precedence, whilst any spare moment seemed to be filled in the service of some scholarly pursuit.<sup>138</sup> There remained little distinction between work and leisure time, even after he ceased to live directly above the Gallery in Great George Street from 1870. Scharf would habitually work on after office hours in his rented rooms at Ashley Place, Victoria: sitting up late to devise picture labels, revise a new edition of the collection catalogue, refine his sketches and tracings, or write-up the minutes from a Trustees' meeting. His diaries reveal that even Sunday breakfast times were reserved for the piecemeal reading of the Earl of Clarendon's *The history of the rebellion and civil wars in England*. His note for 23 January 1881 concludes a series of related entries: 'Finished reading the History of

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<sup>134</sup> Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p. 80. See also Alan Bell, 'Colvin versus Poynter', *The Connoisseur*, no. 190 (1975), pp. 278–83.

<sup>135</sup> Paula Gillett, *The Victorian Painter's World* (Gloucester: Sutton, 1990), p.28.

<sup>136</sup> See Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830–1870* (New Haven: YUP, 1957), p.251.

<sup>137</sup> Timothy J. Barringer, *Men at Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain* (New Haven; London: YUP, 2005), pp.27–74.

<sup>138</sup> See George Scharf to Edmund Oldfield, 26 May 1884 (draft), regarding his conditions for agreeing serve on the Council of the Arundel Society: 'Nothing would be more completely a fulfilment of my ambitions than to find myself in such a position. At the same time, other circumstances force themselves upon consideration. First: the very precarious state of my health & secondly the liability which I am under to official business at inconvenient times which must preclude attention to everything else'; see George Scharf, *Description of the Wilton House Diptych, Containing a Contemporary Portrait of King Richard the Second* (1882) [annotated by George Scharf, with correspondence tipped in], SL, HAL. This work was printed for the Arundel Society in 1882.

Clarendon in 6 volumes to my great pleasure & instruction. I had long intended to undertake the work, but found that by confining it to Sunday morning at breakfast I could make it a habit & so keep to it. I succeeded very well'.<sup>139</sup> In an official letter to Lord Stanhope of 1864, Scharf recalls his initial surprise at the level of commitment his post demanded:

I little foresaw how completely the duties, both directly and indirectly connected with the Gallery, would absorb my time and attention. I had fully expected to find leisure in the evening to complete works of artistic importance in which I was already engaged, and which I afterwards found myself compelled to relinquish one by one in favour of the Portrait Gallery interest.<sup>140</sup>

In later years Scharf would refer to this simply as his 'absorption by portraiture'.<sup>141</sup> In short, his work was all encompassing, and his unmarried state facilitated this level of dedication. As far as he would admit to himself, marriage was a distraction; his letters and diaries hint at private irritation each time a friend announced his engagement or, as joked about amongst his inner circle, deserted 'the noble order of bachelors'.<sup>142</sup> This perhaps also goes some way to account for the strength of his sense of obligation to the Institution and to the Trustees, which remained constant for the length of his career (see also, Chapter 3). Scharf was first and foremost a public servant, conforming to the other central facet of the professional class identified by Gillett, which centred on thoughtfulness, unselfishness and self-discipline.<sup>143</sup> It was a distinctly moral dimension to which individuals could aspire in the act of self-definition: 'The professional man's devotion to the goal of serving society was held to differentiate him from the crude, crass, and socially irresponsible businessman supposedly motivated by self-interest and greed'.<sup>144</sup> Furthermore, in his investigation of emerging professionalism in industrial society, Philip Elliott identifies characteristic values including 'a belief in the principle of payment in order to work rather than working for pay and the

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<sup>139</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 23 Jan. 1881, NPG7/3/1/38, HAL. See also nt. 51.

<sup>140</sup> George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 20 Jun. 1864 (printed copy), NPG20/2, HAL. For a full transcript of this letter, see Appendix II.

<sup>141</sup> George Scharf to Wilhelm von Bode, 2 Apr. 1882, ZSMB, IV/NL Bode 4777 (Scharf, George)

<sup>142</sup> William Frederick Beauford to George Scharf, 23 Sep. 1872 (NPG7/3/5/1/1, HAL): '...Franks's little adventure is quite romantic. I hope his attack of the "blues" is not so bad that we shall have to celebrate another desertion before long'. In his autobiography, Bode claimed that Scharf stayed young by remaining unmarried, finding his life's work in the creation of a portrait collection of 'famous English men'; Bode, *Mein Leben*, p.163.

<sup>143</sup> Gillett, *The Victorian Painter's World*, p.36.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*



superiority of the motive of service'.<sup>145</sup> This attitude applies directly to Scharf, whose occasional and reluctant appeals to the government for an increase to his modest salary, came only when he felt this prevented him carrying out responsibilities to the best of his ability. The seriousness with which Scharf took his position as a government official was manifested in his diligent approach not just to research, but to every aspect of his role. This is especially apparent in his strict adherence to bureaucracy. Easily identifiable across the early institutional records, for example, are occurrences of Scharf's specially devised alpha-numeric code with which he would categorize all portrait correspondence in relation to the minutes of a particular Trustees' meeting, and the associated formal offers of portraits as recorded in the Gallery's Register of Offers (fig. 10). This dedication shaped the very outlook of the Institution; Scharf's impulsive practice of recording and cross-referencing each picture he encountered remains at the core of work undertaken by staff in the NPG's Heinz Archive and Library.

Gertrude Prescott Nuding maintains that Scharf 'epitomised the Smilesian principles of duty and industry' as popularized by social reformer Samuel Smiles in his handbooks titled, among others, *Self-Help* (1859) and *Duty* (1880).<sup>146</sup> I concur, but argue that hand in hand with this went a profound personal interest in his field of study. These dual impulses steered Scharf's professionalism and motivated his endeavours. Although intended to garner Lord Stanhope's support for a formal submission to the Treasury for a pay rise, the following statement nonetheless encapsulates Scharf's professional commitment to the National Portrait Gallery and personal investment in his work: 'Many of the duties which I now perform, and which so entirely and exclusively engage my attention, have been prompted by the deep interest I feel in the objects and in the prosperity of this Gallery. They were voluntary; and subsequent experience has, to a great extent, proved their value'.<sup>147</sup> It was in this sense that reading Clarendon over Sunday breakfast at once constituted work and private enjoyment. Scharf recognized this duality and in a letter to William Smith of 1859, neatly articulates an outlook that would endure: 'My dear Smith, many thanks for the communications you last sent

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<sup>145</sup> Philip Ross Courtney Elliott, *The Sociology of the Professions* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p.52. T. R. Gourvish defines this phenomenon simply as an 'ideology of service'; see T.R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day eds., *Later Victorian Britain, 1867–1900* (London: Macmillan Education, 1988), p.17.

<sup>146</sup> Nuding, 'Portraits for the Nation', p.36. On Smiles see also Asa Briggs, 'Samuel Smiles and the Gospel of Work' in *Victorian People*, rev. edition (London: Folio Society, 1996), pp.97–117.

<sup>147</sup> George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 20 Jun. 1864 (printed copy), NPG20/2, HAL. See also Appendix II.

me and for the loan of the Hanoverian volumes. I am delighted with them and read them “in mingled spirit” of duty and pleasure’.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 10 Aug. 1859, NPG20/3, HAL.

## Chapter 2

### **George Scharf and his circles; social and professional networks across the Victorian art world**

George Scharf's work for the National Portrait Gallery was all encompassing and his meticulous attitude towards each aspect of his official role remained unwavering. Yet despite a singular dedication to his cause, Scharf was not working in isolation. Instead, he benefitted from the expertise and access offered through interrelated circles of contacts. This chapter outlines the extent of Scharf's social and professional networks and maps the physical sites of engagement with numerous scholarly, artistic, and museum world figures. It considers the degree to which these connections proved vital to the success of his practice over the course of his career, and also investigates his own position of influence within this sphere. Of particular significance were Scharf's popular 'home dinner' parties, at which he would carefully draw individuals from these various circles together. Three key participants on such occasions were fellow museum employees Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks of the British Museum, Sir Frederic William Burton of the National Gallery and John Miller Gray of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, whom Scharf counted as at once colleagues and friends. I propose that the spirit of casual exchange and collaboration, which characterized interactions between these men, positioned Scharf and his contemporaries collectively at the forefront of developments in art historical scholarship and professional museum practice, in the second half of the nineteenth century.

#### **Part I: Mapping Scharf's London**

##### **2.1 Investigations and transactions in 'the heart of London'**

George Scharf's private diaries and official Secretary's journals chart an extremely rich and busy life, in which work and leisure time overlapped in a seamless succession of appointments to inspect portraits, invitations to dine, visits to exhibitions, dealers and auction houses and extended research trips. Neither was there a clear divide between his personal and professional relationships. Both his inner - exclusively male - circle of friends and his wider network of acquaintances largely comprised fellow museum employees, librarians, art

historians, antiquaries, collectors and artists.<sup>149</sup> Throughout the year his calendar is punctuated with visits to English country houses to sketch and make notes on collections or as a guest of his aristocratic friends, but at heart he was a Londoner, moving comfortably between a number of locations that held the potential for such professional and social exchanges.<sup>150</sup> Scharf's friends often railed against his reluctance to accompany them on trips abroad (see also, Chapter 1), with NPG Chairman Charles Stewart Hardinge thus concluding his report on an excursion to the continent: 'We had 4 days sketching at Fontainebleau – rocks heather – fine old trees & the perfection of forest scenery...hoping all is well with you *in your dear London*'.<sup>151</sup> Although at various times belonging to several learned societies, including the Archaeological Institute, the Fine Arts Club<sup>152</sup> and the Arundel Society, he remained a loyal and life-long member of the Society of Antiquaries, habitually attending gatherings at Somerset and then Burlington House until ill-health prevented him.<sup>153</sup> Over the course of his career he became thoroughly engrained with its community of scholars: serving on the Council and the Executive Committee, contributing papers on his research, publishing in its journal *Archaeologia* and even re-hanging and re-cataloguing the Society's pictures (fig. 11).<sup>154</sup> Lara

<sup>149</sup> Scharf's friend and executor Freeman Marius O'Donoghue maintained that Scharf 'went much into society, and throughout life enjoyed the esteem and affection of a wide circle of friends'; see Freeman Marius O'Donoghue, 'Scharf, George (1820–1895)', *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1<sup>st</sup> edn., vol. 50 (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1885–1900), p.410. Whilst Scharf's associates were overwhelmingly male, his early diaries do contain occasional references to women connected with this sphere, including Anna Jameson and Elizabeth Eastlake.

<sup>150</sup> Repeated visits were largely to the Kent homes of both Chairmen of the Gallery Trustees (see Chapter 3). Scharf also used these opportunities to work, taking papers with him to discuss Gallery business or undertaking research in situ. His friend Leonard Lindsay writes tellingly in his attempt to lure Scharf for a visit to his more modest family home: 'this is a very small place but I think pretty...When 'working' people come here they are always allowed to disappear as much as they like; 6 Aug. 1888, NPG7/2/7/2, HAL.

<sup>151</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 7 Oct. 1887, NPG7/1/1/4/1/22, HAL, emphasis mine. The relationship between these two men is further explored in Chapter 3. Although the son of a Bavarian artist, sources indicate that Scharf largely identified as British. In 1882, he implores his friend Wilhelm von Bode to write to him in English, his German being 'now so very slow'; George Scharf to Wilhelm von Bode, 29 Jan. 1882, ZSMB, IV/NL Bode 4777 (Scharf, George).

<sup>152</sup> The Fine Arts Club was founded in 1856 at the instigation of John Charles Robinson and its membership (numbering 200) included leading collectors, connoisseurs, museum curators and members of the art trade. Between 1857 and 1865 Scharf regularly attended the club's monthly soirees. He did not become a member of the subsequent Burlington Fine Arts Club, established in 1866, though continued to visit the club's bi-annual exhibitions in Savile Row: see Eatwell, 'The Collector's or Fine Arts Club 1857–1874', pp.28–30.

<sup>153</sup> In his notice of Scharf's death in 1895, President Augustus Wollaston Franks records: 'The connection of our good friend with our Society was long and intimate...His last visit to the Society was at our Heraldic Exhibition last year, where he came with tottering steps but a clear mind, taking the greatest interest in the display that had been brought together'; *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol.15 (1893–95), pp.378–9. Scharf had many friends amongst the Fellows, but two of the closest were antiquary Harold Lee-Dillon, 17<sup>th</sup> Viscount Dillon (later NPG Chairman) and herald Everard Green.

<sup>154</sup> See George Scharf, *A Catalogue of the Pictures belonging to the Society of Antiquaries, Somerset House*, (London, Bungay: John Childs & Son, 1865), HAL; and Susan M. Pearce, *Visions of Antiquity: The Society of Antiquaries of London, 1707–2007* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 2007), p.211. See also *Proceedings of the Society of*

Perry notes that the Society of Antiquaries, like other such institutions, 'offered its members space and materials for the specialist study of their subject, and opportunity to share information at regular meetings'.<sup>155</sup> She argues that the skills and resources - both material and social - cultivated within this environment proved important to the work of various NPG Trustees (amongst whom she includes Scharf). It was Scharf's personal association with the Society's Secretary Charles Knight Watson, for example, that held particular implications for his work.<sup>156</sup> In 1883 he was allowed to take away on loan a very rare volume of tracings after mural paintings of Edward III and his family on the wall of St Stephen's Chapel Westminster, which were destroyed by the fire at the Houses of Parliament in 1834. Permitted to make facsimiles of these images, engravings after Scharf's copies were displayed amongst the earliest portraits in the 'Plantagenet room' of the National Portrait Gallery at South Kensington.<sup>157</sup> These are reported to have been still on display with the collection in the gallery at St Martin's Place, in 1896.<sup>158</sup> Scharf's 1855 election to the Athenaeum Club in Waterloo Place off Pall Mall was also significant. In his history of the club, Frank Richard Cowell notes that unlike many of the other London clubs, it was not the preserve of a wealthy or aristocratic elite 'but, like all true elites, it was an 'inclusive elite' to which achievement in any eminent cultural activity qualified for admission'.<sup>159</sup> Under this criterion Scharf, despite his relatively humble social background, was able to mix on equal terms with men of literary,

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*Antiquaries of London*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol.2, (1862), p.144: 'Mr Scharf explained that in hanging the pictures as they now appear on the walls, he had mainly borne two important objects in view; the one to establish as nearly as possible a chronological sequence, and the other, to bring the smaller and more minutely finished pictures within easy reach of the eye'.

<sup>155</sup> Perry, *Facing Femininities*, p.108.

<sup>156</sup> Scharf was similarly friendly with the Assistant Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries during Watson's tenure, [William] St John Hope; see, for example, George Scharf to St John Hope, 6 Aug. 1890, Correspondence to the Society, 1890 (Scharf), SAL.

<sup>157</sup> See minutes of the 168<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 20 Nov. 1883, NPG 1/4, pp.60–61, HAL. See also 'The National Portrait Gallery', *The Times*, 24 Nov. 1883, p. 8. Scharf thanks Watson and the Council 'for the great privilege which I have enjoyed in being permitted to have the volume away from the apartments of the Society...my sincere thanks for the friendly readiness with which you have on this, as on all other occasions, promoted my wishes'; George Scharf to Charles Knight Watson, 4 Oct. 1883, see Scharf, *A Catalogue of the Pictures belonging to the Society of Antiquaries* [draft tipped in], SL, HAL.

<sup>158</sup> See Cosmo Monkhouse, 'The National Portrait Gallery', *Scribner's Magazine*, Sep. 1896, pp.318–19.

<sup>159</sup> Frank Richard Cowell, *The Athenaeum: Club and Social Life in London, 1824–1974* (London: Heinemann, 1975), p.12. Scharf was elected to the club before his appointment at the NPG on the merit of pre-existing scholarly endeavours. His membership was proposed by Charles Hampden Turner and seconded by Sir Charles Fellows. Signatories included: Charles Barry, William Boxall, Charles Eastlake, Edward Hawkins, Edwin Landseer, Austen Henry Layard, John Murray and Philip Stanhope (then Viscount Mahon); Ballot paper for 'George Scharf Jnr. Esq., Artist F.S.A, M.R.S.S, 1 Torrington Square', 29 Jan. 1855, MEM/1/3/19, ACA.

scientific and artistic distinction.<sup>160</sup> He was, in reality, most often to be found in its library, looking up a reference or copying a portrait from an engraved volume. On 23 April 1863, for example, in between visits to the Society of Antiquaries on the Strand and Paul & Dominic Colnaghi on Pall Mall, Scharf drops into the club's library to verify an 'engraving of Henry 8<sup>th</sup> in Cavendish's Wolsey. Also made extracts from Lord Mahon's Chesterfield'.<sup>161</sup> From the 1870s Scharf was particularly friendly with the club's long-serving Librarian Henry Richard Tedder, who Cowell describes as a 'thorough, painstaking scholar' and whose intense devotion to the library collection he commends.<sup>162</sup> Sharing a meticulous attitude to their work, Scharf would confer frequently with Tedder during research visits to the Athenaeum and often invited him to dinner or other social gatherings at his home. Alongside his use of the club's bibliographic resources, Scharf's diaries also confirm numerous instances of dining with, taking tea amongst, or even meeting on the front steps, illustrious members including: archaeologist Sir Austen Henry Layard, poet Robert Browning, politician and National Gallery trustee Sir William Gregory, antiquary Albert Way and on occasion, statesman William Ewart Gladstone.<sup>163</sup> It is the expectation of exactly these types of social encounters that Scharf acknowledges in his round-up of events for 1855, when he notes: 'My election into the Athenaeum Club promises to be very important'.<sup>164</sup>

Scharf's long association with the Royal Academy at Burlington House likewise facilitated access to the great and the good of the Victorian art world. As noted in Chapter 1, Scharf was a permanent fixture at private views of the Old Masters exhibitions in December, at which he had ample capacity to sketch and make notes in aid of his work for the National Portrait Gallery. More surprising is his regular attendance of the annual Summer Exhibition pre-views

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<sup>160</sup> On Scharf's family background and his extraordinary assimilation amongst social superiors, see Chapter 3.

<sup>161</sup> George Scharf, Secretary's journal, NPG7/1/1/1/1, HAL.

<sup>162</sup> Cowell, *The Athenaeum*, 1975, p. 69. Although 30 years his junior, Tedder's career was of similar length to Scharf's, spanning almost 50 years from 1875 until his death in 1924. The library was reliant on donations from members to top-up those purchased with its annual grant. Scharf gifted copies of 21 of his own publications over the course of his membership; see 'Donations to the Library' 1887–1910, ACA. In 1888 Tedder organized the Alexander Pope Commemoration Exhibition at Twickenham, to which Scharf was a subscriber and for which he helped secure a loan on Tedder's behalf; see *Pope Commemoration 1888, Loan Museum. Catalogue of the Books, Autographs, Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Personal Relics*, July 31<sup>st</sup> to August 4<sup>th</sup> 1888 (Surrey: Edwards King, 1888) [bound with notes by George Scharf and correspondence], SL, HAL.

<sup>163</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, 13 Mar. 1874; NPG7/3/1/31, HAL. Scharf's diaries record regular visits to the Athenaeum where he would meet 'many friends' including for example, on the 12 Feb. 1888: 'Athenaeum Club to Ballot...Sir Frederick [sic] Leighton with whom a long talk'; NPG7/3/1/45, HAL.

<sup>164</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, 1 Jan. 1856, NPG7/3/1/12, HAL. Scharf retained his membership until November 1894, shortly before his death.

in May, showcasing contemporary British art not immediately within his professional remit.<sup>165</sup> This suggests that beyond the possibilities for research, such occasions appealed as chances to meet and interact with members of the art establishment.<sup>166</sup> Certainly his records of the private views document who, rather than what he saw, often listing the ‘many friends’ he encountered in the course of the event. Indeed, Scharf was a willing participant in the Academy’s social calendar, also frequenting the annual ‘Conversazione’ in June that marked the Queen’s official birthday (fig. 12). In his diary for 1870 he notes enthusiastically: ‘Royal Academy Soiree. 9 o’clock cab to R.A. Brilliant & exceedingly well managed...Met heaps of friends & enjoyed myself very much’.<sup>167</sup> A reviewer in *Black & White* describes this elegant and orderly spectacle where emphasis is placed decidedly on the guests, rather than the art works on display:

Up the broad flower-lined stairway flocks the cream of London’s fashion and beauty – and the Art, Literature and Science, the Services and the Law, Connoisseurship and the Aristocracy, all are worthily represented in this great annual Academy festival...the crowded rooms afford plenty of amusement in the meeting of one’s friends, in listening to the fine military band in the sculpture room, and, for many, in looking out for ‘who’s who’, or in the refreshment room downstairs.<sup>168</sup>

From 1879 Scharf attended the Royal Academy banquet, which took place on the Saturday before the start of the Summer Exhibition and was held in the main room. This was an opportunity to engage not just with Academicians, but also with the highest-ranking members

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<sup>165</sup> As a trained artist however, Scharf maintained an interest in contemporary art and artistic practice throughout his life. Writing to Scharf in 1867, William Frederick Yeames notes that after seeing him at the RA private view, ‘I conclude that modern art occupies your attention as well as that of the past’, and hopes he will one day become acquainted with the artists of St John’s Wood; 4 Jun. 1867, NPG7/3/3/9/1, HAL. From the 1880s, Scharf also regularly attended the private views of the Grosvenor Gallery and the New Gallery and held clear opinions on the works he saw there: ‘...To the Grosvenor Gallery especially to see [Lawrence] Alma Tadema’s works. They appear much better in full clear daylight. The Cleopatra contains much wonderful painting and subtleties of sunlight and shade’; George Scharf, personal diary, 15 Mar. 1883, NPG7/3/1/40, HAL.

<sup>166</sup> In considering the group portrait *Private View of the Old Masters Exhibition, Royal Academy, 1888* [NPG 1833] as a representative sweep of the late Victorian art world, Ben Thomas has cited Charles Drury Fortnum’s inclusion as an indicator of his centrality within this network; see Ben Thomas, ‘The Fortnum Archive in the Ashmolean Museum’, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 11, no. 2 (Jan. 1, 1999), pp.253–4. Likewise, the appearance of Scharf’s portrait in Brooks’s painting (see Chapter 1) signifies his own position within this sphere.

<sup>167</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 28 Jun. 1870, NPG7/3/1/27, HAL.

<sup>168</sup> Anon., ‘The Royal Academy Conversazione’, *Black & White*, 27 Jun. 1891, p.666. For a detailed description of the event, see Elizabeth Heath, LVPC entry NPG 2820; <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitExtended/mw00113/The-Royal-Academy-Conversazione-1891#ref5>, accessed 23 Jul. 2015.

of society and office.<sup>169</sup> Paula Gillett observes that, although ostensibly marking the exhibition opening, the dinners were largely an attempt by the Academy to further legitimize itself by gaining the official sanction of government leaders through their presence and speech making. This often resulted in lengthy after-dinner speeches that somewhat clumsily attempted to harness art to matters of politics and empire.<sup>170</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century the male-only guest list had expanded to include, in addition to royalty and government ministers: representatives of universities and medical colleges, presidents of scientific and artistic institutions, heads of departments in the British Museum and leading figures in drama, literature and music. It is interesting to note that whilst from 1882 Scharf was automatically designated an 'ex-officio invitee' by way of his position as Director of the National Portrait Gallery, for the first three years of his attendance – whilst still Secretary of the Gallery – he was listed as a 'private invitee'. This is testament to his own status within the art world, independent of his official position, and perhaps also the strength of his friendships amongst the members of the Royal Academy's Council.<sup>171</sup> In one of his 'Glimpses of Artist-Life' in the pages of the *Magazine of Art*, Marion Harry Spielmann recreates for his readers the experience of attending the banquet, outlining the scene that would have greeted Scharf upon his arrival at Burlington House each year:

At the present day the banquets take place in Gallery III, where, at the long table skirting the north wall, and at the several supports projecting from it, covers for about two hundred and sixty are laid. As each guest arrives, he advances past the guard of honour furnished by the Artists' Corps...and in exchange for his card of invitation he receives a catalogue and a lithographed plan of the tables, with a list and cross-references. The President, supported by his officers, greets him at the head of the decorated staircase, with that proverbial grace and charm of address which makes him an ideal host. Then he mixes with the crowd of celebrities – brilliant with uniforms and orders – until he hears "that tocsin of the soul", the dinner announcement.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> In 1892 Scharf was obliged to forgo both the private view and banquet on account of Lord Hardinge's ill-health, though he concedes in an explanatory letter to the Academy's Secretary that it 'grieves me exceedingly to feel that I am losing my chance of attending one of the most interesting functions of the year'; George Scharf to Frederick Alexis Eaton, 27 Apr. 1892, RA/SEC/11/58/1, RAA. With thanks to RA Archivist Mark Pomeroy for drawing my attention to this material (June 2016).

<sup>170</sup> Gillett, *The Victorian Painter's World*, p.214. It was the custom that during the speech, toasts were made to various attendees, to which those individuals responded.

<sup>171</sup> Annual dinner invitation books 1873–1900, RA/SEC/25/1/18 & 19, RAA. Scharf attended annually from 1879–93, not attending in 1886 and 1894 due to ill-health. Guests were proposed and balloted for each year by members of the Royal Academy Council. The President of the Royal Academy during this period was Sir Frederic Leighton, also an NPG Trustee, member of the Athenaeum Club and on friendly terms with Scharf.

<sup>172</sup> Marion Harry Spielmann, 'Glimpses of Artist-Life: The Royal Academy Banquet', *Magazine of Art*, vol. 10, 1887, p.231.



The fact that Scharf kept the seating plans along with the menu cards, as mementos of the banquets, is evidence of the interest he took in the organization of the guests, where he was positioned and between whom (fig. 13).<sup>173</sup> This is a detail he unfailingly records in his diary each year. In 1881, for example, he was placed between the architect John Loughborough Pearson and the historian William Edward Hartpole Lecky, and chatted with 'old Mr. Webster about [Clarkson Frederick] Stanfield & "Acis & Galatea". Both [William Frederick] Yeames & [Philip Hermogenes] Calderon very cordial'.<sup>174</sup> In 1888 he writes a longer note of his attendance, illustrating the variety of art and museum world figures he encountered on the occasion:

Arrived at Burlington House in time to see the volunteer corps & their band. On getting up to the entrance room, studied and copied names of neighbours at the tables. Saw [John Rogers] Herbert first, then Lord Derby & Dean of Westminster, & [Frederick Alexis] Eaton, [Eyre] Crowe, Calderon, Yeames, [Charles Drury] Fortnum, J[ohn]. Evans, Theodore Martin, [Briton] Riviere, [William Charles Thomas] Dobson, [John Fretcheville Dykes] Donnelly, Sir [Philip Cunliffe] Owen, [John Evans] Hodgson, [Joseph Edgar] Boehm, [John Callcott] Horsley, [Henry Hugh] Armstead, Lecky, Lord Hardinge, Earl Cowper (some talk with before dinner)...I found my hearing very defective. Even Sir F[rederic] Leighton, the Pri. of Wales & Lord Salisbury I could scarcely follow. The thanks for the Admiralty were quite lost, & so likewise the Lord Mayor (de Keyser) of London. After his speech or Lecky's I left the room, talking as I went out to [Henry] Doyle, [William] Agnew and [William Blake] Richmond, [Austen Henry] Layard & [Charles] Newton followed me out.<sup>175</sup>

In turn Scharf cut a familiar figure amongst members of the Academy, his expertise in portraiture and collection arranging acknowledged and positively received. In December 1881 for example, he records lunching at the Royal Academy with the Hanging Committee for the Old Masters Exhibition, after which the position of two pictures lent by the Duke of Marlborough from the collection at Blenheim Palace - which had been the object of his intimate study - were altered to his suggestion.<sup>176</sup> Whilst in 1889, John Callcott Horsley RA

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<sup>173</sup> See NPG7/3/6/7, HAL.

<sup>174</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 30 Apr. 1881, NPG7/3/1/45, HAL. Yeames and Calderon both received artistic tuition from Scharf in 1848.

<sup>175</sup> George Scharf, personal memo, 5 May 1888, NPG7/3/6/7, HAL.

<sup>176</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, 24 Dec. 1881, NPG7/3/1/38, HAL. See also 24 Dec. 1890: 'Did some business at office and then went to Royal Academy lunched & went over their old masters with Eton[sic], Horsley, Calderon & Hodgson, pleasant talk, examined pictures' (NPG7/3/1/47, HAL). Scharf would have dined with the Royal Academicians in the General Assembly Room at Burlington House. Calderon was both RA and the Academy's Keeper whilst Eaton, as noted above, was the Secretary. In a letter to Bode of 1882, Scharf describes Eaton as 'a great friend of mine'; George Scharf to Wilhelm von Bode, 17 Nov. 1882, ZSMB, IV/NL Bode 4777 (Scharf, George).

visited the NPG to consult with him 'as to historical portraits for the Burlington House Winter Exhibition' of that year.<sup>177</sup> His unofficial involvement in the organization of the Winter (or Old Master) exhibitions speaks volumes for his reputation during this period, the academicians being notoriously resistant to external advice.

## 2.2 The commercial art world

Scharf's frequent rounds of West End picture dealers and auction houses in search of portraits to bring to the attention of the Trustees ensured a continued intimacy with the machinations of - and actors within - the commercial art market. He would often visit multiple locations in a day, deliberating over portrait engravings for the reference collection or identifying potential acquisitions to be sent on to the Gallery on approval and examined at the next Board meeting.<sup>178</sup> Throughout his diaries particular names reoccur: Henry Graves & Co. on Pall Mall, Paul & Dominic Colnaghi in Pall Mall East, Thomas Agnew & Sons on Old Bond Street, Henry Farrer & Son on New Bond Street, Charles Henry Waters in Pimlico, John and then Jane Nosedà on the Strand, the auctioneers Foster's on Pall Mall and Christie, Manson & Woods in King Street. Pre-views of the sales at Christie's provided significant opportunities for research and interaction with members of the art world, as were the sales themselves. Located in St James's at the physical centre of the London art market, it was the leading handler of art sales during the period and a channel through which historical pictures from private collections across the country became, briefly, accessible.<sup>179</sup> Scharf's run of annotated Christie's sale catalogues spanning 1858–94, still held in the Heinz Archive and Library, underlines the central importance of this establishment in the execution of his professional duties over the length of his career. The margins of these catalogues are crammed with quick sketches and notes of portraits that caught his attention (fig. 14), and his private view

<sup>177</sup> George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 13 Aug. 1889, NPG7/1/1/1/1, HAL. Each year a small committee of academicians was responsible for drawing up a list of pictures it hoped to borrow from private collections; see Haskell, *The Ephemeral Museum*, pp.74–75. Horsley visited the Gallery on a number of other occasions to study portraits in aid of research for his historical paintings.

<sup>178</sup> See for example, George Scharf, personal diary 5 Jul. 1881: 'To Fosters, Christies, Colnaghi's, Parkers, Graves's & Nosedà's in quest of pictures for sale'; NPG7/3/1/38, HAL. Marcia Pointon also remarks upon Scharf's 'active investigation' of portraits for purchase; see Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p.227. On Scharf's early collaboration with Trustees William Smith and William Hookham Carpenter to this end, see Chapter 3. Dealers would routinely have pictures sent to the NPG and then arrange for them to be collected again, whilst Christie's regularly sent portraits for inspection ahead of a sale.

<sup>179</sup> See Pamela M. Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850–1939* (Manchester; New York: MUP, 2011), p.9.

invitations are regularly bound into the volumes themselves.<sup>180</sup> The crowded rooms in King Street were often the sites of last minute negotiations between interested parties, where Scharf was able to gauge the atmosphere surrounding a particular sale. As late as 1893, he notes in his diary for the day preceding the sale of pictures from Humphrey Mildmay's collection on 24 June: 'Busy day at Christies saw many friends. Ld De L'Isle, Sir Villiers Lister, Julian Goldsmid, Lord Rowton, Lord Savile again, talked to [William] Agnew & [Thomas H.] Woods... Arranged about bidding for pictures'.<sup>181</sup> Scharf rarely bid himself at auction, normally submitting commission bids or enlisting a dealer to act as agent on the Gallery's behalf, although usually attending the Saturday sales to observe the outcome.<sup>182</sup> However, one of the few accounts of his bidding in person is worth quoting at length, exemplifying as it does the wholeheartedness with which he embraced the theatricality of the saleroom. In describing to the Trustees his purchase of *The Somerset House Conference* picture (fig. 15) at the Hamilton Palace sale on 8 July 1882<sup>183</sup>, Scharf somewhat breathlessly recalls:

...[A]t the time when it was placed on the easel, I stood up, so that those who were present might see that the National Portrait Gallery was prepared to compete...I determined to go to the extent of 2000 guineas and then to stop. But when I found that M. Gauchez was my opponent, and that this picture so full of National & historic interest, was likely to be carried out of the country, - perhaps to decorate a foreign museum -, I had no hesitation in continuing the contest still further, and resolved to bid 400 guineas more. At this point I found that the picture remained with me, and was secured, amidst applause, for the National Portrait Gallery.<sup>184</sup>

<sup>180</sup> *Christies Catalogues with Notes and Sketches*, Mar. 1858–Jul. 1894, 27 vols. [bound with annotations by George Scharf], SL, HAL. It is evident that Scharf made notes and drawings in the catalogues during the private views and the sales themselves. In one instance, Scharf makes a quick sketch of John Charles Robinson at the sale of Albert Levy's collection on 3 May 1884 (p.21), and inscribes on the front cover of the catalogue: 'GS 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1884, with notes taken during the sale'.

<sup>181</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 23 Jun. 1893, NPG7/3/1/50, HAL. The prices realized for portraits of interest to the Trustees exceeded the commission bids in this instance, and were purchased by Agnew's acting on behalf of private clients. See George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 13 Jul. 1893, NPG7/1/1/1/8, HAL. Thomas Henry Woods was Scharf's central contact at Christies, regularly alerting Scharf to portraits coming up for sale and also soliciting his expertise in identifying a sitter, information that could impact significantly upon a picture's material value; see, for example, Thomas Henry Woods to George Scharf, 14 Apr. 1889, RP 818, HAL.

<sup>182</sup> Scharf also oversaw acquisitions at Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge off the Strand, although of the London auction houses Christie's commanded the majority of business from the NPG Trustees, facilitating 38 purchases over a 30-year period.

<sup>183</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary 8 Jul. 1882: 'To Christie's to attend the sale. Obligated to go early to secure a place and had a special card for the private entrance'; NPG7/3/1/38, HAL. On the Hamilton Palace sale see Christopher Maxwell, 'Spurious Articles': the Purchases of the Department of Science and Art from the Hamilton Palace Sale of 1882', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28, no. 1 (Mar. 1, 2016), pp.109–24; see also 'The Hamilton Palace Sale', *The Times*, 10 Jul. 1882, p.9.

<sup>184</sup> Minutes of the 163rd meeting of the Board of Trustees, 12 Jul. 1882, NPG 1/4, p. 17, HAL. The Treasury agreed to advance £2,200 (about £242,000 today) for the purchase of the picture, although Scharf secured it for £2,520 (2,355 guineas). It is one of the rare examples of Scharf acting on his own initiative and outside of the Trustees' authority, although his actions resulted in the severe curtailment of the purchase grant for a number of years. Léon

With him in the room would have been representatives from the Bond Street and Pall Mall dealerships, none more influential than Sir William Agnew, whom Spielmann describes in the 1880s as the ‘recognised head of the trade, the Grand Mogul of picture-trade-land’.<sup>185</sup> Originally a Manchester firm, William and Thomas Jnr. oversaw the establishment of a London branch of Thomas Agnew & Sons in 1860, though it was William who dominated the auction room over the next thirty years, buying for stock and for a string of wealthy clients (fig. 16).<sup>186</sup> Agnew’s had built its reputation on the buying and selling of contemporary British pictures, but from the 1860s it also branched towards Old Masters and the secondary market. Scharf’s close acquaintance with William Agnew was to prove significant and of direct benefit to the National Portrait Gallery.<sup>187</sup> Indeed, in contrast to comparable figures with whom Scharf interacted, the archive does yield evidence of the friendship that existed between these two men.<sup>188</sup> In one of many such entries in his personal diary, for example, Scharf records a trip to Old Bond Street in May 1894 that combined work and pleasure: ‘Expedition to Agnews and the Grafton Gallery...Long talk with Wm Agnew, he full of visit to Spain & Malta, talked of pictures & carved images. Arranged about Romney sale’.<sup>189</sup> This referred to the sale at Christie’s of the artist’s effects, belonging to a descendant, on 24 and 25 May (see also, Chapter 3). The Trustees had expressed interest in acquiring Romney’s unfinished self-portrait (fig. 17) and the acting Chairman Lord De L’Isle asked Scharf to suggest an ‘insider’ who could be enlisted to secure the

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Gauchez (1825–1907) was an influential Belgian dealer and art critic, who specialized in purchasing pictures for a number of American plutocrats. He had been in formal correspondence with Scharf on at least one former occasion, having negotiated in 1878 the sale of a portrait of the Duchess of Portsmouth to the Trustees [NPG 497]; see RP 497, HAL.

<sup>185</sup> Marion Harry Spielmann, ‘Glimpses of Artist-Life: Christie’s’, *Magazine of Art*, vol. 11, 1888, p.231.

<sup>186</sup> See Geoffrey Agnew, *Agnew’s, 1817–1967*. (London: Bradbury Agnew Press Ltd., 1967), p.23.

<sup>187</sup> Their association probably dated back to the 1857 Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition when, as Art Secretary, Scharf appealed to Agnew for help identifying the owners of particular pictures; see Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, pp.31–2. Agnew was a principal organizer of the 1887 Jubilee loan exhibition at Old Trafford in Manchester, for which he asked the NPG Trustees for the loan of Scharf’s portrait [NPG 985]; see William Agnew to George Scharf, 7 May 1887 (transcript): ‘...I was up from Manchester our success there was great. Your portrait beams upon the crowd, almost on the spot where you presided in ‘57’; Minutes of the 182<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 4 Jun 1887, NPG 1/4, p. 171, HAL.

<sup>188</sup> Lara Perry argues that the relationships between dealers and the Gallery were characterized by ‘social co-operation’; see Perry, *Facing Femininities*, p.98. Scharf’s other regular contacts within the art trade included Henry and Algernon Graves and Andrew McKay of P. & D. Colnaghi, though there is nothing to suggest these relationships went beyond the limits of professional exchange.

<sup>189</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 21 May 1894, NPG7/3/1/51, HAL. Their friendship is further indicated through the tone of their correspondence, which is invariably casual and open, with Agnew occasionally addressing letters to ‘My dear friend Scharf’ (see, for example, William Agnew to George Scharf, n.d but Jun. 1894, RP NPG 972).

painting on behalf of the Gallery.<sup>190</sup> The latter immediately approached Agnew who readily employed his expertise in the sale room, managing to purchase the portrait for the modest price of £441 (below the Christie's estimate), by successfully persuading other dealers not to bid in competition. He then passed the picture on to the NPG at cost price, declining to charge commission.<sup>191</sup>

This transaction marked the culmination of nearly 10 years of close collaboration, which coincided with an important period in the London art market, beginning with the Hamilton Palace sale in 1882. The Settled Land Acts that came into effect later that year and in 1884 resulted in a succession of high profile public auctions, through which the aristocratic owners of a number of debt-laden country house estates took the opportunity to liquidate their assets, by selling off portions of their art collection previously defined as entailed property.<sup>192</sup> For the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, these sales represented an opportunity to acquire a number of significant historical portraits, hitherto considered unavailable for the national collection. But they also presented their own challenges, namely how to reconcile the Gallery's straitened budget with the high prices generated though the widespread interest in these events, shown amongst British, European and American collectors. To this end, securing a skilled negotiator to act on the Institution's behalf was of the utmost importance. That Scharf was already on personal terms with Agnew at the beginning of the 1880s, is evidenced by the circumstances concerning his decision to donate a portrait of Edmond Malone by Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1883 [NPG 709], of which he casually informed Scharf one day when they were returning to town on a steamboat from the Tower of London.<sup>193</sup> From this point on the two often worked closely together, Agnew being Scharf's first point of contact when the Trustees became interested in acquiring portraits from an upcoming sale. Agnew agreed to bid for three pictures for the NPG at the Blenheim Palace sale at Christie's in July 1886. Scharf conferred at length with him two days prior to the sale of the works in question, the most desired being a

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<sup>190</sup> See Philip Sidney, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron De L'Isle and Dudley to George Scharf, 20 May 1894, RP NPG 959. The Trustees were hopeful the picture would not attract the same level of attention commanded by the artist's portraits of women, which were fetching substantially inflated prices at auction throughout the 1890s.

<sup>191</sup> See RP NPG 959. At the same time the Trustees declined to purchase a small head identified as the poet William Cowper [NPG 972], also secured at the sale by Agnew. Instead, Scharf enquired whether it would be possible 'in your personal friendship to me, to allow me to have [the picture] at the sum named in your offer to the Gallery' [£11.11s]; George Scharf to William Agnew, 8 Jun. 1894 (draft), RP NPG 972. See also, Chapter 3.

<sup>192</sup> See Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven, [CT]: YUP, 1997), p.123.

<sup>193</sup> See George Scharf (memo), n.d but 1883; RP 709, HAL. I am grateful to Barbara Pezzini for pointing out this reference (2015).

portrait of the Duke of Bedford by Thomas Gainsborough, which Agnew secured for £630 (fig. 18).<sup>194</sup> According to his policy, this was transferred to the Gallery at the price he paid for it, without commission or the acceptance of an honorarium for his services.<sup>195</sup>

Under similar circumstances Agnew also pursued three pictures at the Wimpole Hall Sale in June 1888, delighting Scharf by securing the lot for £231, just over half of the sum authorized by the Trustees for the purpose.<sup>196</sup> This had been voted in anticipation of the Treasury advancing a portion of the grant for the following year, which in fact they refused. With purchasing funds at that point exhausted, Agnew generously acquiesced to a deferral on the payment until the new financial year, without charging interest on the loan in the interim.<sup>197</sup> Undoubtedly, Agnew was motivated in his liberality towards the NPG through his role as a public figure; he served as a Liberal Member of Parliament between 1880 and 1886.<sup>198</sup> Writing to Scharf on the eve of the Blenheim Palace sale he offers the services of his firm to the Gallery, adding 'you know I think my invariable resolve - viz that my service for a public institution must be honorary & not a question of profit but of duty'.<sup>199</sup> Yet this is not to underestimate the importance of the friendship between Agnew and Scharf, in governing the former's actions. On a number of occasions Scharf identified pictures of interest to be sold at auction before the next meeting of the Board of Trustees, at which a potential purchase could be authorized. Working informally together, without official recommendation, Agnew agreed to buy portraits at his own risk and offer them to the Trustees on a speculative basis, thus enabling the subsequent acquisition of a number of significant portraits.<sup>200</sup>

<sup>194</sup> See George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 29 Jul. 1886, NPG7/1/1/1/5, HAL (and RP NPG 755, HAL).

<sup>195</sup> See formal letter from George Scharf to William Agnew, 30 Aug. 1886 (draft): '...the Trustees desire to put on record their full appreciation of your liberality in declining to accept any honorarium for assistance rendered towards completing the purchase which they succeeded in making'; NPG7/1/2/1/1/4, HAL.

<sup>196</sup> NPG 798, 799 & 800. Agnew again rendered his services gratuitously; see minutes of the 186<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 17 Dec. 1888, NPG 1/4, p.207, HAL.

<sup>197</sup> On the purchase of the Wimpole Hall pictures, see also Perry *Facing Femininities*, p.98, nt.39. Agnew likewise sanctioned similar terms of credit for other purchases, crucially enabling the Trustees to obtain important portraits that would otherwise have been lost to the nation.

<sup>198</sup> Agnew was created a baronet in 1895.

<sup>199</sup> See William Agnew to George Scharf, 10 Jun. 1886, papers relating to the 179th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 10 Jun. 1886, uncatalogued material, HAL. Indeed, this was an attitude he extended to the National Gallery during the period, similarly bidding on their behalf at the Leigh Court Sale of 1884, for example, and charging no commission.

<sup>200</sup> Including Sir Robert Peel, 2nd Bt, by John Linnell, oil on panel, 1838, NPG 772; and Horace Vere, Baron Vere of Tilbury, by Michiel Jansz. van Mierevelt, oil on panel, 1629, NPG 818.

### 2.3 The museum sphere

Of the London institutions the British Museum, as a location for professional interaction, cast a long shadow. This had been a familiar site since Scharf's youth; a place he visited regularly to study and make sketches after objects in the collections. In 1843 he was appointed official artist on the government-funded expedition to Asia Minor to obtain valuable Lycian antiquities for the museum, during which time he produced a series of drawings of the excavated artifacts in situ.<sup>201</sup> In 1848 Scharf was even appointed a Special Constable to help defend the building's fabric from the threat of Chartist uprisings, which broke out during various points of that year.<sup>202</sup> Between the dates of his tenure at the National Portrait Gallery, Scharf cultivated friendships with individuals in almost every museum department, so that a single research trip could also entail several visits to 'friends' on duty or in the museum residences.<sup>203</sup> In the Coins and Medals department these included William Sandys Wright Vaux (Keeper from 1861) and his assistant Herbert Appold Grueber. The latter would send Scharf casts of coins and medallions featuring portraits of British sitters such as Henry VIII and William Pitt, to aid his research. This was especially useful for his long-term project to determine authentic likenesses of Mary Queen of Scots.<sup>204</sup> In the Manuscripts department he was on close terms with Richard Rivington Holmes, Edward Augustus Bond and his successor as Principal Librarian, Sir Edward Maunde Thompson.<sup>205</sup> Towards the start of his career Scharf

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<sup>201</sup> British Museum Trustees Minutes, vol.III, 27 May 1843 (C.6225), BM. Scharf had initially accompanied Sir Charles Fellows on his second exploration of Asia Minor three years previously, in 1840. Four careful pencil drawings resulting from this period are preserved in the museum's department of Prints & Drawings; see 2012,5034.1–4, P&D, BM.

<sup>202</sup> Scharf kept his certificate of appointment as a Special Constable, of which 10,000 were recruited to bolster police numbers; NPG7/3/6/8, HAL. In his diary for 1882 he recalls: 'On this day in 1848, I was a Special Constable at the British Museum, and sallied forth with [W.S.W.] Vaux & some others to Kennington Common [rally] & heard the last of the speeches & the rain beginning to fall the agitators recommended the people to disperse. Not a soldier was to be seen during the whole of the distance. Special Constables were patrolling. I returned to the Museum & dined with Mr [Edward] Hawkins. Now 34 years ago!' (10 Apr. 1882, NPG7/3/1/39, HAL).

<sup>203</sup> Scharf's long-term friendship with Augustus Wollaston Franks is discussed in detail in the following section. Friends of similar longevity included Edward Hawkins (Keeper of Antiquities from 1826), Sir Charles Newton (Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities from 1861) and Edmund Oldfield (Assistant in the Antiquities department), although these relationships cannot be considered of specific advantage to his work for the National Portrait Gallery.

<sup>204</sup> See letters from Grueber to Scharf, 20 Feb. & 12 May 1889, NPG7/3/3/20, HAL and George Scharf, personal diary 18 May 1889: 'Working at Mary coins & costumes. Found the plaster casts useful' (NPG7/3/1/46, HAL). Scharf would often dine with Vaux and 'Mrs Vaux' in their museum residence, whilst Grueber regularly visited Scharf at home and worked closely with him in organizing the New Gallery exhibitions from 1888.

<sup>205</sup> Holmes was appointed Librarian at Windsor Castle in 1870 and socialized with Scharf at his home and at the Society of Antiquaries, of which he was also a Fellow. See George Scharf, personal diary, 19 May 1889: 'Lunch with

was able to engage the expertise of the Keeper of the department, palaeographer and librarian Sir Frederic Madden, in relation to a portrait purchased as Edward IV. In a letter to William Smith dated 9 May 1866, he recounts:

Sir Frederic Madden came here yesterday & examined the portrait which has caused us no little anxiety. He is decidedly of opinion that the writing is, comparatively speaking, very modern...& he thinks that, very possibly, genuine old letters may be lurking under the large ones now staring us in the face. He was much struck by the Cardinal Pole. His eye at once caught the coat of arms which was the first point that attracted my notice at the shop.<sup>206</sup>

The connections crucial to his work, however, were those maintained with three successive Keepers of the Prints & Drawings Department between 1857 and 1895: William Hookham Carpenter, also an involved NPG Trustee (see Chapter 3); George William Reid; and Sir Sidney Colvin.<sup>207</sup> Surviving letters attest to continued communication between Scharf and the holders of this post, and confirm a regular exchange of information and expertise. His friendship with these men and more junior members of the department - including Lionel Cust, Louis Fagan and Freeman Marius O'Donoghue - ensured immediate access to the collection for the purposes of portrait authentication, and an insider's knowledge of new acquisitions pertinent to his work.<sup>208</sup> This extract from one of Carpenter's letters neatly illustrates the position of privilege he enjoyed:

My dear Scharf, Thank you for your obliging information as to the portrait of [Jonathan] Richardson. When you come here I should wish you to see a very

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Mrs Bond at BM...Bond took me on to the ground which was occupied by his garden & now being excavated for the foundations of a new print room & galleries'; NPG7/3/1/39, HAL. Thompson remained an important contact at the Museum and both he and Bond attended Scharf's funeral at Brompton Cemetery (see minutes of the 210<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 9 May 1895, NPG 1/5, p.160–170, HAL). In the 1860s and 70s Scharf was also on friendly terms with John Winter Jones, Keeper of the department of Printed Books from 1856 and Principal Librarian (1866).

<sup>206</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 9 May 1866, NPG20/3, HAL. This portrait had been purchased for £10 in February 1866, but was removed from public view in April, after an inscription found upon it compromised the identification. To avoid loss of annual purchase grant funds, Chairman Lord Stanhope agreed to buy it and relieve the Gallery of the painting (see NPG7/1/2/1/4/2, HAL). The 'Cardinal Pole' is NPG 220, donated by Smith in the same year.

<sup>207</sup> See, for example, George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 30 Mar. 1881, NPG7/1/1/1/5, HAL: 'To Nosedá, Fawcett's, British Museum to verify engravings & to obtain Mr G.W. Reid's judgement on certain impressions'.

<sup>208</sup> For an account of the department during this period, see Antony Griffiths, *Landmarks in Print Collecting: Connoisseurs and Donors at the British Museum since 1753* (London: BMP, 1996), pp.13–15. Fagan appeared a somewhat divisive figure, with Frederic Burton declaring: 'That gentleman is one I should prefer to have no communication with, even at the other side of a stone wall'; Frederic William Burton to George Scharf, 20 Sep. 1882; see, *The Costume Society, 1883, Brouwer, Italian Sculpture, Berlin* [volume with separate publications and letters bound in, with annotations by George Scharf], SL, HAL. However, Scharf's papers give no indication he felt anything other than amity towards his younger colleague.



interesting print of Nelson I obtained this morning. It is a profile printed in colours from a picture by [Henry] Singleton. It is full of intelligence and strongly indicates the character of the man. Should I be absent Reid will show it you. I really prefer it to any other I have seen.<sup>209</sup>

Scharf knew Sidney Colvin from the early 1880s; in 1883 he visited Colvin at Cambridge whilst he was Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, and shortly before his appointment to the British Museum.<sup>210</sup> Over the course of his long Keepership, Colvin implemented a number of significant reforms that saw the department reorganized along more professional lines (fig. 19). This included the recruitment of university-trained historians as curators and the development of a more rigorous and scholarly model of cataloguing. His passion for his work and ability to move easily in different circles of British society secured contacts amongst a wide body of museum professionals, and an influential position within the contemporary art world.<sup>211</sup> He and Scharf interacted casually at social gatherings or conferred at length during regular visits to the print room. It was in this spirit that the two men liaised over objects of common interest to their respective collections; extant correspondence documents the manner in which institutional collaboration was carried out in ad hoc and informal terms. For example, in relation to drawings of Elizabeth I and a 'Lady' in the dress of Mary Queen of Scots in the Wimpole sale of 1888, Colvin writes a swift postcard to Scharf: 'I gather from your note that you do not intend to try for the drawings yourself – in which case I shall certainly do my best to secure them'.<sup>212</sup> Likewise Scharf approaches Colvin in 1892, indicating his concern that a portrait of the artist John Leech [NPG 899], sold at Christie's and offered for re-sale by Colnaghi's, be secured for either national collection:

My dear Colvin, I have been trying to come to you at the Museum to talk over two or three subjects, but in vain. When I went to Mr Lawrence's house & saw his pictures he told me that [John Everett] Millais wished us to possess the John Leech...I inferred that the reserve price would be £100 and wrote to inform you of it, as I wished, next

<sup>209</sup> William Hookham Carpenter to George Scharf, 11 May 1860, NPG7/1/1/4/2/3, HAL. See 1861,0209.114, P&D, BM. George William Reid was Carpenter's assistant in the department before succeeding him as Keeper in 1866.

<sup>210</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, 1–4 Aug. 1883: 'Breakfasted with Colvin. Went with him to see his new museum and lecture gallery in course of building. To the Fitzwilliam and saw the collection of casts for the new museum'; NPG7/3/1/40, HAL. Colvin was responsible for developing a substantial collection of casts from antique sculpture, transferred to the new Museum of Classical Archaeology in 1884.

<sup>211</sup> See Griffiths, *Landmarks in Print Collecting*, pp.14–15.

<sup>212</sup> Sidney Colvin to George Scharf, 22 Jun. 1888, on card stamped 'British Museum', pasted into Scharf's annotated Christie's catalogue, 26 Jun. 1888; see SL, HAL. See also George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 28 Apr. 1885: 'To Professor Sidney Colvin at the British Museum to make arrangements for the bidding for the Cheney [Louis de] Carmontelle drawings [Edward Cheney sale, Sotheby's, 29 Apr. 1885]. To Messrs. Colnaghi's' (NPG7/1/1/1/5, HAL).

to us, that the B. Museum should have it...[Colnaghi's] fixed the price of £35 on it and at that figure it is offered to us. As Millais is one of our Board I feel little doubt that my Trustees will accept it. If not, I will let you know.<sup>213</sup>

In terms of providing a template for museum practice, the National Gallery served as a vital site of comparison and Scharf remained in close contact with various members of its curatorial staff. When establishing institutional procedures for the National Portrait Gallery, he initially sought advice from Sir Charles Eastlake, as the NG's first Director and a founding NPG Trustee, and his Keeper Ralph Nicholson Wornum. Already a respected scholar and writer of art historical texts, the latter was appointed in 1855 at Eastlake's recommendation and went on to support the work of his successors Sir William Boxall and Frederic William Burton. Over the course of his twenty-two year career, Wornum oversaw the day-to-day management of the collection, whilst the Directors spent much time travelling in Europe in search of new acquisitions. His role focused on the cataloguing, interpretation and display of the pictures at Trafalgar Square, for which he maintained a 'practical administration characterized by efficiency and careful record keeping'.<sup>214</sup> He was thus an important point of reference for Scharf, whose official responsibilities overlapped distinctly. In his diary for 8 June 1859 - just three years into the job - Scharf records one of many trips 'to see Mr. Wornum respecting catalogues & modes of meeting applications or pictures sent on inspection'.<sup>215</sup> Between this date and Wornum's death in 1877, he visited the Gallery frequently to consult with his colleague on various methods of operation, including: the format for returns to Parliament, the course adopted for employees' sick leave, heating arrangements in the galleries and the NG's approach to 'polishing pictures'.<sup>216</sup> Scharf was also to borrow the format of his expanded NPG

<sup>213</sup> George Scharf to Sidney Colvin, 12 May 1892, Departmental Letter Book, 1890–92, P&D, BM. With thanks to Jessica Feather for bringing this letter to my attention (2015). Colnaghi's paid £24 for the portrait at the sale of Edwin Lawrence's effects at Christies on 6 May 1892. Millais previously offered this portrait to the NPG in 1864, though the then Chairman Lord Stanhope considered the sitter of insufficient merit for inclusion in the collection; see Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 29 Nov. 1894 (NPG7/1/1/4/8, HAL).

<sup>214</sup> Thomas Seccombe, 'Wornum, Ralph Nicholson (1812–1877)', rev. David Carter, *ODNB* (OUP, 2004; online edn., May 2015); <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29978>, accessed 20 Aug 2015. On Wornum at the National Gallery, see also Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain*, pp.11–12 & 24–25.

<sup>215</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, NPG7/3/1/16, HAL. James Hamilton categorizes Wornum as a 'pioneer scholar-curator', 'who appreciated the importance of clarity, order and interpretation': James Hamilton, *A Strange Business: Making Art and Money in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Atlantic Books, 2014), p.285. In this respect, his approach to his professional duties was very similar to Scharf's (see Chapter 1).

<sup>216</sup> See, for example, George Scharf, Secretary's journal: 12 Jan. 1872; 26 Oct. 1872; 13 Feb. 1873; 16 Mar. 1877, NPG7/1/1/1/3–4, HAL. Wornum also bestowed his scholarly expertise in the service of the National Portrait Gallery, on one occasion visiting the Gallery to pronounce judgement on the authenticity of a so-called Turner self-portrait (1 Jun. 1866, NPG7/1/1/1/2, HAL). Scharf similarly assisted the National Gallery, especially on matters of iconography. In his diary for 1 Jul. 1861, for example, Wornum records the following in relation to the identity of the sitter in a Florentine portrait [NG 670]: 'George Scharf tells me that the Maltese Cross is always white, if so our picture does not represent a Knight of Malta, the cross is red'; NGA2/3/2/13, NGA (as noted by Avery-Quash and

collection catalogue from Wornum and Eastlake's *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Pictures in the National Gallery*, first published in 1847.<sup>217</sup> Eastlake was additionally an active NPG Trustee and, whilst the relationship between the two men seemingly remained professional and formal, Susanna Avery-Quash and Julie Sheldon argue that they nonetheless 'appear to have been sympathetic colleagues, united by their commitment to systematizing and overseeing institutional management'.<sup>218</sup> The Gallery itself served as a model for the latest developments in museum design and decoration. After viewing the Barry Rooms soon after their completion in 1876, Scharf notes in his diary: 'to National Gallery where Wornum showed me the new rooms which are magnificently decorated. I was quite surprised at their extent. The bright red of the walls & abundance of gilding will soon be toned down by the London atmosphere. It is the most palatial construction I have seen for any Picture Gallery in London'.<sup>219</sup> It continued to function for Scharf as a locus of professional expertise, where he engaged with William Boxall,<sup>220</sup> Frederic Burton and then Wornum's replacement Charles Locke Eastlake on subjects ranging from the repair and lining of pictures, to suggested regulations for students in the gallery.<sup>221</sup>

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Sheldon, *Art for the Nation*, p.239, nt. 132). See also George Scharf, personal diary, 3 May 1858: 'Called in at National Gallery and gave Wornum the names of several Saints in the new pictures' (NPG7/3/1/15, HAL). There is also evidence of scholarly rivalry between the two men outside of their official capacities, including a disagreement in 1866 regarding Scharf's attribution of the portrait of Christina Duchess of Milan at Windsor Castle [RCIN 403449] to Holbein, and in 1867 over the attribution for a portrait of Mary I in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries [LDAL 336].

<sup>217</sup> See Chapter 5. Wornum was employed to work on the 1847 catalogue before his appointment as Keeper. Coinciding with a failed application for an increase to his salary (on which he found it increasingly hard to live), Scharf considered applying for the better-paid position as Wornum's successor. He was possibly dissuaded from this course of action by Lord Hardinge, who stressed Scharf's indispensability to the NPG and Wornum's lack of influence within his role; see George Scharf, personal diary, 31 Dec. 1877, NPG7/3/1/16, HAL; and Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 10 Dec. 1877, NPG7/1/1/4/1/13, HAL.

<sup>218</sup> Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation*, p.120 (see also, Chapter 3). Scharf's and Eastlake's acquaintance certainly predated the former's appointment to the NPG in 1857, probably beginning in the early 1850s, when Scharf worked on Eastlake's English edition of Kugler (see Chapter 1).

<sup>219</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 1 Apr. 1876, NPG7/3/1/33, HAL. Scharf writes this a year before the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877, an exhibition space that became renowned for the sumptuousness of its interiors. Such architectural splendor, however, was not necessarily applicable to the NPG's more modest requirements (see Chapter 4).

<sup>220</sup> Scharf and Boxall (Director, 1866–74) were good friends and frequently conferred when pictures of interest to both institutions came up at auction. This was the case with Hogarth's small self-portrait [NPG 289], which was sold at Christie's on 10 Jul. 1869. Boxall agreed not to bid for the picture after learning of the NPG Trustees' intention to acquire the portrait. In a draft memo (intended for an unidentified publication) Scharf insists: 'The authorities of the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery do not bid at public sales against each other. Mr Boxall & the N.P.G Secretary are on terms of close friendship & frequently hold communication on matters of art'; see RP NPG 289, HAL. The portrait was later acquired by the NPG from Agnew's, who had successfully bid for the picture at the sale.

<sup>221</sup> See, for example, George Scharf, personal diary, 29 Aug. 1871 & 9 Oct. 1889, NPG7/3/1/28 & 46, HAL. Charles Locke Eastlake (1836–1906) was Sir Charles Eastlake's nephew. Scharf used the NG's leaflet outlining rules for

In contrast to relations with administrators of the British Museum and the National Gallery, it is worth noting the absence of any indication of institutional affinity between the National Portrait Gallery and the other prominent London museum during this period, the South Kensington Museum. This may be due in large part to Scharf's and the Trustees' concern with preserving the Gallery's independence, initially after their move to South Kensington in 1870 and especially after the transfer of the collection as a loan to the SKM's outpost at the Bethnal Green Museum, in 1885 (see Chapter 4). Disharmony may have arisen as early as 1865, when the officers of the Science and Art Department (who oversaw the Museum) commenced the organization of three consecutive loan exhibitions of British historical portraits, held at South Kensington between 1866 and 1868.<sup>222</sup> Having been placed with members of the Board on a 'Committee of Advice' for the project, Scharf was dismayed to discover that his attempts to contribute his specialized knowledge were generally rebuffed. In a letter to the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* he disassociates himself from errors in the catalogue for the 1866 exhibition, explaining:

In my own case, where assistance was readily proffered as early as in July of last year, I was distinctly informed that my "services" were not required; and when afterwards I ventured to give some information – such, for example, as of Lord Methuen's fine Van Dyke portrait of the Duke of Richmond with a dog, and a valuable portrait of Milton...no application was made for the loan of those pictures. At the last moment, however, information was requested from me regarding the locality of some portraits still wanting, and in a very few cases I was able to render assistance; but that constitutes only a very small part of what I would gladly have performed.<sup>223</sup>

Whilst Scharf maintained friendships with particular SKM employees including Richard Forster Sketchley and Robert Henry Soden Smith<sup>224</sup> - whom he often visited in the Museum's

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students as a template for the NPG's, simply inserting 'Portrait' into the title and inscribing on the front: 'guide for the style of setting up the N.P.G. Regulations for Students' (see NPG77/8, HAL). Interaction between Burton and Scharf is discussed at length in the following section.

<sup>222</sup> Writing to Smith on the subject of the exhibitions, Scharf voices the following concern over identity: 'Whilst the Trustees of this Gallery are giving their best help to the South Kensington people, they must not lose sight for a single moment of their own independence. The collection of pictures which the Trustees have by this time must not be interfered with or lessened by borrowings', adding cryptically: 'Pray be very guarded when dealing with certain persons in power'; George Scharf to William Smith, 10 Jul. 1865, NPG20/3, HAL.

<sup>223</sup> George Scharf, 'The Errors of the National Portrait Exhibition', *Pall Mall Gazette*, n.d, but 7 Aug. 1866 (cutting), NPG7/2/4/6, p.53, HAL. This document problematizes Roy Strong's assertion that the exhibitions were held 'under the direction of the Portrait Gallery's first director, Sir George Scharf'; Roy C. Strong, *Painting the Past: The Victorian Painter and British History* (London: Pimlico, 2004), p.90.

<sup>224</sup> Sketchley was Assistant Keeper at the museum between 1864 and 1894, and also Secretary of the 1866 National Portraits Exhibition. He did in fact visit Scharf in person to confer about historical portraits for this purpose; see

Art Library - one can detect a resistance to Sir Henry Cole's famously strident approach to administering his South Kensington empire, even after he had passed on directorship of the museum to Sir Francis Philip Cunliffe-Owen in 1874.<sup>225</sup> In a letter to William Smith of 1876, Scharf reports on an exchange with the man himself: 'I saw Sir Henry Cole yesterday who wanted to know why we were so churlish as to refuse to return our numbers to the Society of Arts' list of visitors. I told him that we sent to the Board of Trade which was government & the Society of Arts was not'.<sup>226</sup> Although in formal communications Scharf continued to address officials with the utmost courtesy, there is a sense that privately he held members of the Science and Art Department at arm's length, referring to them jokingly as the 'South Kensington notoriety'.<sup>227</sup> With no offer of alternative accommodation and faced with a strong risk of fire at the Kensington site however, Scharf and the Trustees reluctantly accepted shelter under their wing at Bethnal Green. Yet, it was the threat of his own removal with the portraits to the 'far East'<sup>228</sup> that prompted Scharf's most definitive utterance on the importance of his physical proximity to his professional world. In a letter to the Secretary of the Office of Works he insists on an office in a central location from which to conduct his work, arguing:

[I]t would be impossible for me to transact business there. All investigation of pictures offered for sale, all researches into their history, and ordinary negotiations to say nothing of interviewing people etc., must be carried on in the heart of London, or at least within call of Christies, the British Museum & co.<sup>229</sup>

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George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 17 Jan. 1866, NPG7/1/1/1/2, HAL. Soden Smith was Keeper of the Art Library between 1857 and 1890.

<sup>225</sup> Scharf's dealings with the museum's other central figure, Sir John Charles Robinson, largely relate to his early membership of the Fine Arts Club or date from Robinson's tenure as Surveyor of the Queen's pictures, subsequent to his position at the SKM. They did interact over the acquisition of the 'Phoenix' portrait of Elizabeth I [NPG 190] in 1865, however, Scharf at that time describing Robinson as a 'great Expert' in matters of authentication; see NPG RP 190, HAL.

<sup>226</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 18 Apr. 1876, NPG20/3, HAL. Susanna Avery-Quash and Julie Sheldon write about the museum establishment's cautious attitude towards the expansionist tendencies of 'King Cole', citing in particular Eastlake's distrust of him and his ambition to create a permanent museum of British Art at South Kensington; see Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation*, pp.121–2.

<sup>227</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 8 Apr. 1864, NPG20/3, HAL. See also Scharf's official letters to the Science and Art Department, MA/1/N133, VAM. It is interesting to note that although in 1872 Stanhope advised Scharf to speak with Cole regarding employees' sick leave - the NPG and the SKM being then effectively 'under the same roof' - Scharf decided instead to seek the advice of Wornum and Boxall at the National Gallery on the matter; see Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 24 & 26 Oct. 1872, NPG7/1/1/4/1/11, HAL.

<sup>228</sup> George Scharf to Charles Locke Eastlake, 20 Aug. 1885, NPG66/3/1/1, HAL..

<sup>229</sup> George Scharf to Algernon 'Bertie' Mitford, 16 Jul. 1885, NPG66/3/1/1, HAL. As quoted in Perry, *Facing Femininities*, p.68.

## Part II: Ashley Place and its Participants

### 2.4 Home dinners and scholarly resources

Scharf was a frequent guest at the London homes of colleagues or aristocratic friends but from the 1860s, and with increasing regularity after moving from Great George Street in 1869 to a set of rented rooms at 8 Ashley Place, Victoria, he held his own dinner parties at which - in addition to a core of fond and loyal friends - he carefully drew acquaintances from his social and professional networks together. Scharf's diaries reveal his interest in fostering a dynamic atmosphere on such occasions. Alongside details of the menu, he routinely records the order in which he placed individuals around his table, the success of the event judged afterwards by the extent of lively conversation generated. In a letter to William Smith of 1874, Scharf reflects on the effectiveness of his latest grouping:

The great secret of entertainment on a small scale is I believe strictly to select friends who have (or should have) relations to one another rather than to the host himself. It was very gratifying to find that I succeeded in making some people known for the first time to each other and also in making others still better acquainted than before.<sup>230</sup>

His guests in this instance were Smith, Frederic William Burton, the publisher John Murray, Augustus Wollaston Franks, close friend Jack Luard Pattison and Louis Fagan. Alongside the seating plan for the evening, Scharf also notes in his diary that 'chatting kept up vigorously till 12 o'clock' (fig. 20).<sup>231</sup> For the series 'Celebrities at Home' a writer in *The World* likens Scharf's Ashley Place assemblies, if not to a salon, then to orchestrated 'symposia'.<sup>232</sup> These events were by all accounts animated affairs, and Scharf a convivial and popular host. Wilhelm von Bode recalls benefitting from his hospitality on a number of Sundays from lunch to 'Wild Suppers', where he had the opportunity to meet various domestic and foreign scholars and museum professionals with whom Scharf offered 'the richest and most convenient opportunity to talk'.<sup>233</sup> This would have been of especial use to Bode, whose own

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<sup>230</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 24 Mar. 1874, NPG20/3, HAL.

<sup>231</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 23 Mar. 1874, NPG7/3/1/31, HAL.

<sup>232</sup> Anon., 'Celebrities at Home: No. DCCXLVIII. Mr George Scharf, C.B., F.S.A., in Ashley Place', *The World*, 28 Sep. 1892, p.468. The writer goes on to describe 'the handsome silver loving-cup given to [Scharf] in 1882 by the little circle of friends accustomed most frequently to gather round his table...whose names are linked with his own on the inscription'.

<sup>233</sup> Bode, *Mein Leben*, p.173. See, for example, George Scharf, personal diary 20 Apr. 1879 [Sunday]: 'Grueber, Franks & Dr Bode came to lunch. Dr Bode remained all day with me, Franks came again in the evening to supper. He & Bode staid till 12 o'clock'; NPG7/3/1/36, HAL. Foreign participants in the Ashley Place gatherings were usually

achievements as an art historian must be considered in relation to his prodigious activity as a museum administrator and his untiring efforts towards extending the collections of the Berlin museums.<sup>234</sup> Jeremy Warren has stressed the particular importance of Bode's links with Britain and the British, noting that in the second half of the nineteenth century the best museums and private collections were in Britain and 'as a young man Bode set out systematically to study and learn his way around them'.<sup>235</sup> To this end, forging links with individuals who might afford him information on and access to artworks was a necessity. Scharf himself was a key contact in this regard, especially considering his familiarity with the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Marlborough and his collection at Blenheim Palace.<sup>236</sup> Writing to Bode in 1879, presumably in response to an expressed desire to visit Blenheim whilst in England, Scharf assures him: 'Dear Dr Bode, I have at once written and sent to you a line to the Duke's agent who resides just outside the gates of Blenheim Palace. If he is there he will afford you every facility'.<sup>237</sup> Similarly, Scharf's private notes on Old Master pictures in British collections were a central resource, mined by Bode for information: 'I should be very glad to give you 'the run' of all my sketchbooks of my earlier days even before the Manchester Exh. of 1857...But still some of my notes of the subsequent British Institution Exhibitions and the Burlington House collections may afford you some fruit'.<sup>238</sup> During the 1880s, the movement of artworks from country house collections to the London market provided important opportunities for purchases for Berlin. In this respect Bode, who became increasingly confident as a buyer, had the advantage over many of his contemporaries. Warren notes that when the Marlborough collection came up for sale in 1885 he was well prepared, having already made several visits to Blenheim to study the pictures, 'even recording hypothetical valuations in his notebooks'.<sup>239</sup> Scharf also provided a model for efficient museum practice; Bode based his own collection

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European but occasionally came from further afield, including Charles Callahan Perkins of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, who visited in 1862 and 1881.

<sup>234</sup> See Stephanie E. Dieckvoss, *Wilhelm von Bode and the London Art World* (MA thesis, University of London (Courtauld Institute of Art), 1995), p.1. Bode was appointed Director of the Sculpture Department of the Berlin Museum (later Altes Museum) in 1883 and Director of the Paintings Collection in 1890, throughout his career maintaining extensive networks of dealers and collectors on an international scale. Scharf's diaries record 19 visits by Bode to Ashley Place between 1879 and 1892.

<sup>235</sup> Jeremy Warren, 'Bode and the British', *Jahrbuch Der Berliner Museen* 38 (Jan. 1, 1996), p.122.

<sup>236</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>237</sup> George Scharf to Wilhelm von Bode, 5 May 1879, ZSMB, IV/NL Bode 4777 (Scharf, George)

<sup>238</sup> George Scharf to Wilhelm von Bode, 2 Apr. 1882, ZSMB, IV/NL Bode 4777 (Scharf, George)

<sup>239</sup> Warren, 'Bode and the British', p.123. Bode secured four paintings for Berlin. The 8<sup>th</sup> Duke of Marlborough disposed of a number of pictures from the collection before the Christie's sale in 1886.

catalogues on those of the London museums, including Scharf's 'excellent' expanded edition of the NPG catalogue.<sup>240</sup> In return, Scharf enjoyed his intimate association with the prestigious German curator and scholar, categorizing their relationship under 'Friendships one may boast of'.<sup>241</sup>

Scharf did much to encourage and facilitate the work of a number of younger professionals within the modest four walls of his home. For example, the artist and gallery manager Charles Edward Hallé writes appreciatively: 'Very many thanks for...your kind general invitation to Ashley Place – you may be sure I shall avail myself of it as I like having a chat with you & the men who are always to be found in the congenial atmosphere of your house'.<sup>242</sup> For the art critic and future Keeper of the Wallace Collection Claude Phillips, an invitation to one such gathering in 1888 proved a valuable opportunity to network:

My dear Scharf...I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed your dinner the other night; it was quite something to look back to as an exceptionally pleasant gathering presided over by an exceptionally genial host. It was besides a profitable evening to me as I made great friends with both the learned Doctors and am to meet them presently in Paris.<sup>243</sup>

Phillips was referring to Bode and the Dutch scholar and collector Abraham Bredius.<sup>244</sup> Besides this exposure to a range of international contacts, such men utilized the extensive scholarly resources offered in this environment. Bode, for instance, made use of Scharf's specialized library, referring particularly to the annotated catalogues and private sketchbooks when

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<sup>240</sup> Wilhelm von Bode, 'The Berlin Renaissance Museum', *The Fortnightly Review*, Oct. 1891, pp.509. On this expanded version of the NPG catalogue, see Chapter 5. Scharf recorded posting his 1884 edition to Bode, for the latter's reference: 'Three Catalogues to send to Germany for Bode, [Hugo von] Tschudi & [Adolf] Michaelis'; George Scharf, personal diary, 13 Oct. 1884, NPG7/3/1/41, HAL. Influence extended both ways throughout the nineteenth century. Whilst in the first half of the century Britain looked to Germany for models of art historical scholarship and collection management (see Chapters 1 & 4), by the later 1800s Britain led the way globally in museum practice.

<sup>241</sup> George Scharf to Wilhelm von Bode, 1 Jan. 1888, ZSMB, IV/NL Bode 4777 (Scharf, George).

<sup>242</sup> Charles Edward Hallé to George Scharf, 1 Jun. 1889, NPG7/2/7, HAL. Hallé assisted Sir Coutts Lindsay in creating the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877 and founded the New Gallery with Joseph Comyns Carr in 1888.

<sup>243</sup> Claude Phillips to George Scharf, 17 Feb. 1888, NPG7/3/3/20/6, HAL. Another regular guest was the art historian (William) Martin Conway, Professor of Art at University College, Liverpool during the 1880s and future Director of the Imperial War Museum.

<sup>244</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, 13 Feb. 1888, NPG7/3/1/38, HAL. Bredius became Director of the Mauritshuis museum in The Hague in 1889.



researching his book on Rembrandt in 1891.<sup>245</sup> He recalled that Scharf hoped his notes and books would 'give every young scholar joy', and that he possessed 'an unusual teaching talent, assisting anyone who wanted to be taught'.<sup>246</sup> The writer in *The World* effectively sets the scene at Ashley Place in the 1890s:

Your first glance round the cosy and comfortable library, which is his ordinary sitting-room, suggests that it contains nothing but books: books everywhere - on the ample rows of shelves, on the revolving cases, on the tables, in the cupboards and over them, under the windows, even on the shutter-cases; books, reports, pamphlets, codexes, indexes, printed and in manuscript - books everywhere.<sup>247</sup>

Scharf's expansion of his private reference collection over his lifetime was steady and deliberate. It is interesting to note that his personal library - partly preserved in the NPG's Heinz Archive and Library - includes numerous presentation volumes inscribed to Scharf by the authors.<sup>248</sup> Copies of his own publications often contain a loosely inserted sheet on which he lists the names of colleagues and associates to whom he also sent copies.<sup>249</sup> This suggests his participation in a common practice of scholarly circulation. There is evidence to indicate the significance Scharf placed on this process as a networking tool. When stipulating the terms for devising an account of historical portraits in the Worcester Exhibition of 1882, he insists on the provision of 'fifty copies gratuitously allowed...solely for the distribution to friends in literary inter-change', as had been the case for all his publications.<sup>250</sup> The result was the steady compilation of key texts and contemporary scholarship of direct use for his research, which

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<sup>245</sup> Bode, *Mein Leben*, p.173. See George Scharf, personal diary, 14 Jun. 1891: 'Dr Bode did not come till after lunch. We then had a full examination of all my Manchester & British Institution Catalogues for works on Rembrandt[sic] and a selection of my SB sketchbooks brought expressly from the offices'; NPG7/3/1/48, HAL.

<sup>246</sup> Bode, *Mein Leben*, p.173.

<sup>247</sup> Anon., 'Celebrities at Home', 1892, p.468. For an outline drawing by Scharf of his library at Ashley Place in 1890, see NPG D6614.

<sup>248</sup> For examples of presentation volumes in Scharf's library see nt. 108. See also Ben Thomas, 'The Fortnum Archive in the Ashmolean Museum', p.259 for notice of Scharf's letter to Charles Drury Fortnum on receipt of the latter's essay on portraits of Michelangelo.

<sup>249</sup> For example, Scharf sent copies of his *Archaeologia* essay on a painting of St George and the Dragon to 40 individuals (and 7 libraries), including: John Charles Robinson, Richard Rivington Holmes, Frederic William Burton, Sidney Colvin, Harold Lee-Dillon, Everard Green, William Conway, Lionel Cust, Augustus Wollaston Franks, Herbert Grueber, Robert Henry Soden Smith, Edward Augustus Bond, Adolf Michaelis, Wilhelm von Bode, Hugo Tschudi, Charles Callahan Perkins, Hallam Murray, Frederick Eaton and John Miller Gray; see *On a votive painting of Saint George and the dragon, with kneeling figures of Henry VII. His queen and children* (1886) [annotated by George Scharf and note bound in with letters], SL, HAL. Gray's copy, inscribed and dated by Scharf, is still in the Library of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (with thanks to Imogen Gibbon for providing this information, 2016).

<sup>250</sup> George Scharf to organizers of the Worcester Exhibition, 4 Oct. 1882, NPG7/3/3/14, HAL.

Scharf was also keen to make available to others. Further beneficiaries included Herbert Grueber of the British Museum and Leonard C. Lindsay, fellow organizers of the New Gallery's Stuart, Tudor and Guelph exhibitions (1889–91). Whilst compiling the official catalogue for the consecutive shows the two younger scholars regularly worked in Scharf's library, making use of his volumes of historical reference before staying to dine.<sup>251</sup> Ashley Place therefore functioned as both a social and an intellectual hub.

## 2.5 Important friendships: Franks, Burton and Gray

Of the names which reoccur in Scharf's diaries, that of Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, the British Museum's Keeper of British & Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography, appears with the most frequency. Theirs was a friendship that spanned the forty years of Scharf's career, and the surprising lack of known correspondence between the pair is perhaps explained by the regularity with which Franks is recorded as visiting Scharf at home - and vice versa - or being present at meetings of the Society of Antiquaries and other social occasions.<sup>252</sup> Appointed to the department of Antiquities in 1851, Franks spent the next 45 years avidly acquiring objects for the collections, dramatically enriching the holdings of mediaeval and later antiquities of all descriptions and increasing the amount of ethnographic material tenfold.<sup>253</sup> David Wilson maintains that Franks was almost single-handedly responsible for the formation of the 'non-Classical, non-Near-Eastern' side of the museum, collecting material as diverse as Japanese porcelain, Indian sculpture, Chinese bronzes and European porcelain.<sup>254</sup> When not sourcing objects abroad, he was an almost constant fixture at Scharf's London dinner parties, especially when living above the Christy Collection at nearby Victoria Street from 1865 (fig. 21).<sup>255</sup> In many ways Franks was a similar man: a bachelor, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (later Director and President), a member of the Athenaeum Club, personally unassuming but

<sup>251</sup> See, for example, George Scharf, personal diary 15 Nov. 89, 29 Jun. 1890 and 5 Jan. 1891, NPG7/3/1/46–8, HAL.

<sup>252</sup> See Marjorie Caygill, 'Franks and the British Museum - the Cuckoo in the Nest' in Caygill and Cherry eds., *A.W. Franks*, p.93. Caygill presumes that Scharf first became involved with Franks during their work for the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857, although the former is first recorded in Scharf's diary in 1855 as a fellow guest at the British Museum residence of Edward Hawkins; see George Scharf, personal diary, 18 Sep. 1855, NPG7/3/1/11, HAL.

<sup>253</sup> See Petch, 'Two Nineteenth-Century Collectors-Curators Compared and Contrasted', p.192.

<sup>254</sup> David Wilson, 'Augustus Wollaston Franks - Towards a Portrait' in Caygill and Cherry eds., *A.W. Franks*, p.1.

<sup>255</sup> The banker and collector Henry Christy bequeathed his collection of ethnographic artifacts to the British Museum in 1865. As there was no spare room to exhibit this material at the Museum, the trustees secured a suite of rooms at 103 Victoria Street (Christy's former home) for this purpose, and the collection was overseen by Franks before being transferred to the museum in 1884.

sociable and well-liked, with a wide circle of friends and a formidable reputation for scholarship.<sup>256</sup> Whilst considering the similarities in character between the two men, it is worth also registering the disparity in their social backgrounds. Born into a wealthy family, Franks was educated at Eton and Cambridge and did not rely on his government salary as Scharf did, his own private income allowing him to purchase objects outright for the museum when he encountered them. Franks matched Scharf however, in his dedication to research and interpretation, the seriousness with which he undertook his role as a public servant and his diligent attitude towards his official responsibilities, not least the meticulous documentation of objects.<sup>257</sup> John Mack notes Franks's enthusiasm for record-keeping, including the creation of a paper report for each accession with an accompanying drawing executed by a draughtsman recompensed from his own pocket: 'The end product was not simply adherence to bureaucratic principle, but the creation of a scholarly archive'.<sup>258</sup>

In 1875 Franks moved into one of the British Museum residences, which became a meeting point for various distinguished individuals who shared his interests: antiquaries, archaeologists, collectors, connoisseurs, ethnographers and museum people.<sup>259</sup> Franks was thus a conduit to an extended network of European professionals. Reciprocal invitations to dine or attend his 'conversazioni', provided Scharf with further occasions to engage with a wide range of international colleagues, including Adriaan de Vries, Keeper of engravings at the National Print Room in Amsterdam, Hugo von Tschudi of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin and Julius Lessing, the first Director of Berlin's decorative art museum.<sup>260</sup> Scharf also placed importance on his more low-key encounters with his friend and official counterpart.

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<sup>256</sup> Franks (1826–97) and Scharf were near contemporaries. The former was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1853, a year after Scharf. Caygill asserts that learned societies were a central part of Franks's social and academic life, noting his particular devotion to the Antiquaries. He also had a reputation as a clubman, spending much time at the Athenaeum, to which he was elected in 1857 with Scharf's support for his candidature. Like Scharf, Franks never married. Caygill argues that he was 'in many ways wedded to the Museum on which he lavished his time and money and which was his main beneficiary'; see Caygill, 'Franks and the British Museum - the Cuckoo in the Nest', pp.90–95.

<sup>257</sup> Such qualities were admired by Bode, who observes of Franks: 'In his self-sacrificing activity, his simple and unassuming manner and his knowledge, this excellent man still stands as the unrivalled model of a museum director'; Bode, *Mein Leben*, p. 172. See also Warren, 'Bode and the British', pp.139–40.

<sup>258</sup> John Mack, 'Antiquities and the Public: the Expanding Museum, 1851–96', in Caygill and Cherry eds., *A. W. Franks*, p.44.

<sup>259</sup> These gatherings were almost entirely without women. David Wilson describes Franks as that Victorian product, 'a man's man'. Apart from his warm friendship with the collector and heiress Lady Charlotte Schreiber, his social relationships with women remain obscure; Wilson, 'Augustus Wollaston Franks - Towards a Portrait', p.3.

<sup>260</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, 5 May 1878; 28 Feb. 1879; and 11 Sep. 1884, NPG7/3/1/35–41, HAL.

For example, he carefully records in his diary the details of a weekend stay with Franks at the museum, illuminating a scene of quiet industry between two men at ease in one another's company:

We breakfasted late, at 9.30, & wrote letters. Franks was arranging book plates; writing letters. We did not go out all day. I was copying engraved portraits from one old book of the Lynden family. We sat up chatting & looking at a German funny book the History of Rampsouitis till 1.30 (fig. 22).<sup>261</sup>

The diaries hint at a relationship of informal professional exchange. An entry for 1884, for example, tantalizingly records a conversation between the two of them at dinner on the recent sale of the Fountaine Collection of pottery and porcelain at Christie's, and the management of public collections in general.<sup>262</sup> Scharf took an interest in display techniques employed by Franks at the British Museum - regularly visiting to investigate his fresh arrangements or 'new rooms' - whilst Franks would often consult Scharf and his collected resources on matters of scholarship.<sup>263</sup> Franks was appreciative of Scharf's scholarly generosity. Writing after Scharf's death in 1895, he recalls that 'aided by a good working library [Scharf] was most obliging in helping others, and all his friends could rely on his giving them some hint or suggestion which would be useful in their enquiries'.<sup>264</sup> The few extant letters from Scharf to Franks in the British Museum, illustrate a ready relaying of information. He is, for instance, keen to relate the fact that four enamel plates at Blenheim Palace correspond exactly with an example collected by Franks at the Museum, including in the letter two careful drawings of the coats of arms he found on the back. Scharf takes time away from his own research to collate records on Franks's behalf: 'I hope to make a good many notes of the enamels that are here...The curious china jars will be rather difficult to trace as they are large and stand in a public passage

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<sup>261</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 2 Sep. 1883, NPG7/3/1/40, HAL. Scharf notes that he was staying with Franks to give his servants, the Balls, a holiday. Michie and Wahal ponder how Scharf managed to bridge the social gap between himself and Franks (and others in his close friendship circle), concluding: 'These are the people Scharf envisioned as his peers, and his sense of their equal status must have hinged on their shared knowledge of and enthusiasm for, antiquities, architecture and art'; see Michie and Wahal, *Love among the Archives*, p.72.

<sup>262</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, 22 Jun. 1884, NPG7/3/1/41, HAL. Scharf records that the conversation was 'very interesting', but unfortunately does not expand upon its context.

<sup>263</sup> In return, Franks maintained an interest in the National Portrait Gallery's collection, for example attending various Sunday private views of the portraits at South Kensington between 1882-85; see NPG75/1/7, HAL.

<sup>264</sup> Augustus Wollaston Franks, 'Presidential address', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol. 15 (1893-5), p.379.

or anteroom. I shall however do my best'.<sup>265</sup> By the 1890s, Franks would have been able to count upon Scharf's expertise in relation to a portrait in his own collection, when the latter confidently asserted: 'I have compared my sketch of your wax mask in the British Museum called Cromwell with the plaster one now offered to us and the well authenticated portraits of the Protector & I have no hesitation in expressing my utter disbelief in the mask in the museum having the smallest connection with Oliver Cromwell'.<sup>266</sup>

The artist Sir Frederic William Burton was a friend of similar longevity who, after his appointment as Director of the National Gallery in 1874, also became an increasingly important professional associate.<sup>267</sup> Succeeding William Boxall as the third Director of the Gallery, he was the last holder of the post to have executive power over the purchasing of art works (fig. 23).<sup>268</sup> During his 20 years' tenure Burton was responsible for securing some of the most significant pictures in the collection, including Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* and Leonardo da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks*. Scharf knew him from the late 1850s, soon after he moved from Dublin to London in 1858; it is likely the two first met during a gathering at the Society of Antiquaries.<sup>269</sup> Another regular attendee at Ashley Place, Burton participated freely in this energetic forum. Scharf records one evening, when an old friend was also in attendance, that 'Bode came early & so did Burton. They had a long chat upon art & continued it at dinner, rather to the exclusion of [Richard] Dick Worsley who sat a distance opposite me'.<sup>270</sup> On more

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<sup>265</sup> George Scharf to Augustus Wollaston Franks [from Blenheim Palace], 3 Sep. 1862, Papers of Augustus Wollaston Franks, BEP, BM. Scharf was working on the catalogue of pictures in the Duke of Marlborough's collection, at this time.

<sup>266</sup> George Scharf to Augustus Wollaston Franks, 12 Aug. 1890, Departmental Correspondence, BEP, BM. See sketch of the British Museum mask by Scharf, 12 Aug. 1890, SSB 122, NPG7/3/4/2/137, p.4, HAL. This is SLMisc.2010, BM, which is still catalogued as Oliver Cromwell, although doubts have since been expressed about its identity. A plaster cast of the death mask was not acquired by the NPG at this time (see Register of Offers, 19 Jul. 1890, CXCI F4, NPG85/2/5, HAL).

<sup>267</sup> In response to Scharf's letter congratulating him on his NG appointment, Burton exclaims: 'And my dear boy – you are just the man to offer me great help', and praises Scharf's 'long experience of the sort of business involved in both our posts, & your tact, natural & acquired, in conducting it'; William Frederic Burton to George Scharf, 21 Feb. 1874, papers relating to the 122nd meeting of the Board of Trustees, 11 Jul. 1873 [envelope of private correspondence], uncatalogued material, HAL (with thanks to Jacob Simon for drawing my attention to this letter, 2016).

<sup>268</sup> See Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, pp.79–80. Burton, unlike Scharf, had a reputation for being occasionally abrupt and impatient in his manner, though close friends saw through these foibles and he formed many close friendships (see also, Chapter 3). In a letter written towards the end of his life, Scharf describes Burton as a 'dear good constant friend'; see George Scharf to Austen Henry Layard, 29 Jun. 1894, Add MS 39100, f.320, BL.

<sup>269</sup> In his youth, Burton was also a highly regarded scholar in the field of Irish antiquities and archaeology. Scharf supported his election as Fellow of the London Society of Antiquaries, in 1863. See George Scharf, personal diary 16 Dec. 1859: 'Fredk. Burton, an artist & excellent fellow, staid last night till ¼ past 12 with me'; NPG7/3/1/16, HAL.

<sup>270</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 8 Aug. 1882, NPG7/3/1/39, HAL.

than one occasion Burton and Franks were able to offer their particular expertise to the direct benefit of the National Portrait Gallery. In a letter to William Smith of 1876, Scharf notes their response to a potential acquisition brought home for further inspection: 'Both Mr Franks & Mr Burton have carefully examined the portrait of Henry 7<sup>th</sup> which has been offered to us, and they are highly in favour of our retaining it. Burton is especially pleased with it as a work of art & piece of colour' (fig. 24).<sup>271</sup> Burton and Scharf were close to Charles Stewart Hardinge, the second Chairman of the National Portrait Gallery's Trustees, who formed an official bridge between the two establishments, also serving as a Trustee on the National Gallery's Board. It was the personal bond between these men that translated into formal collaboration between the institutions, particularly in the case of the loan of some prestigious acquisitions to Trafalgar Square, when the NPG's collection moved from South Kensington to the Bethnal Green Museum. As related to Hardinge by Burton:

I had a conversation with Scharf today, and found him very sad at the thought that the Vienna picture & the Council...should go with the other pictures to Bethnal Green. He thinks that it would be a bad compliment to the Austrian Emperor if the former was relegated to the East End as soon as it reached London. I cannot but feel with him on that point.<sup>272</sup>

This friendship triangle was to prove significant to Scharf throughout the second half of his career (fig. 25). The three would share information on potential acquisitions and liaise closely over pictures of mutual interest. In relation to the Blenheim Palace sale of 1886, Hardinge was anxious to ensure the course of action to be adopted by each institution was clear. Writing to Scharf following a trip to Christie's prior to the sale, he recounts seeing Burton there 'in a very uncertain frame of mind - we have I think £2000 left to spend on the Blenheim pictures. He is still rather sweet on the Gainsboro' [NPG 755] - I have told him that he must confer with you before the sale in order that we may not clash. He has promised to do so'.<sup>273</sup> A week later Burton writes to reassure Hardinge that he and Scharf had agreed upon their strategy in the

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<sup>271</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 26 Feb. 1876, NPG20/3, HAL. Smith responds: 'I heartily rejoice that you have obtained the opinions of two such excellent judges as Mr. Franks and Mr. Burton about the portrait of Henry the seventh, and that they are so favourable...the only question will be as to the price' (William Smith to George Scharf, 26 Feb. 1876, NPG7/1/1/4/2/11, HAL). This portrait was offered for sale by E. G. Muller, 12 Endell Street, Long Acre, for £120 (see Register of Offers, 4 Feb. 1876, CXXXII I6, NPG85/2/3, HAL).

<sup>272</sup> Frederic William Burton to Charles Stewart Hardinge, 19 Jul. 1885, NPG66/3/1/1, HAL. These two pictures were the group portraits: *The Somerset House Conference, 1604*, by unknown artist [NPG 665] and *The House of Commons 1793-94*, by Karl Anton Hickel [NPG 745]. Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria, donated the latter picture to the Gallery in 1885.

<sup>273</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 20 Jul. 1886, NPG7/1/2/1/1/4, HAL.

sale room: 'I had a talk with Scharf yesterday about next Saturday's sale. The only picture it appears we both want is the Gainsborough. But I have no desire to interfere with the N.P.G in this instance & Scharf & I have settled clearly our respective parts. If he fails to secure it for 400 guineas, & cannot go beyond that, I shall bid on a bit'.<sup>274</sup>

Scharf was able to offer specific help to Burton concerning the acquisition of Raphael's *Ansidei Madonna* altarpiece [NG 1171], purchased from the Marlborough collection in 1885. His private anxiety over the loss of the picture abroad perhaps set in place the chain of events necessary to secure it for the nation. Writing to Burton on the matter as early as 1878, Scharf evidently considers his uncharacteristic indiscretion justified on this occasion and urges him: 'Do not lose sight of the Duke of Marlborough's Raphael. I valued it to his Grace at £20,000. He has enormous expenses and an extravagant wife who will sacrifice anything to maintain her native dignity. This is Confidential. I am afraid of Berlin public or private'.<sup>275</sup> He later aided Burton in defending a charge leveled publically by Frederic George Stephens in the *Athenaeum*, that the condition of the picture had deteriorated since its move to the National Gallery. Scharf sent Burton tracings of the sketches and notes on the appearance of the panel that he made when examining the picture at Blenheim in 1872, for which the latter was extremely obliged: 'These sketches are most valuable in relation to the history of the picture & in a secondary way they afford the most complete & incontrovertible proof of the error, to use a mild term, into which the "Athenaeum" fell, or allowed itself to be led, in its statements'.<sup>276</sup> Further correspondence confirms a casual reciprocity between Scharf and Burton in relation to their daily professional undertakings. They would compare notes on institutional procedures, swap annual reports and collection catalogues, and occasionally co-coordinate unified responses concerning purchase grants and other sources of funding.<sup>277</sup> This was the case

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<sup>274</sup> Frederic William Burton to Charles Stewart Hardinge (copy), 28 Jul. 1886, NPG7/1/2/1/1/4, HAL. Presumably Burton is referring to Scharf's instructions to Agnew, who bid for the portrait on the NPG's behalf (see above). See George Scharf, personal diary, 31 Jul. 1886: 'To Christie's & got there about ¼ to 1 o'clock sat by Burton & [Henry] Doyle...The heat of the room oppressive. We bought the Gainsborough. Went with Henry Doyle [Director of the National Gallery of Ireland] to the Burlington Club & had tea' (NPG7/3/1/43, HAL).

<sup>275</sup> George Scharf to Frederic William Burton, 22 Aug. 1878, NG68/1/15, NGA. In mentioning 'Berlin', Scharf is probably referring in large part to Wilhelm von Bode. This picture and Van Dyck's *Equestrian Portrait of Charles I* [NG 1172] were purchased together from the 8<sup>th</sup> Duke of Marlborough by private treaty. Scharf's valuation is unreliable; elsewhere he reports valuing it to the Duke at £40,000. The painting eventually sold for £70,000.

<sup>276</sup> Frederic William Burton to George Scharf, 22 Jun. 1885, NPG7/1/2/1/1/4, HAL. See also, Anon. [Frederic George Stephens], 'Fine Art Gossip', *The Athenaeum*, 30 May 1885, p.704 and Frederic William Burton, 'The Ansidei Raphael', *The Times*, 3 Jun. 1885, p.7.

<sup>277</sup> See, for example, Frederic William Burton to George Scharf, 19 Nov. 1888: 'My dear Scharf, I ought sooner to have thanked you for the N.P.G Catalogue you so kindly sent me. I have not yet had time to look into it - but I anticipate great pleasure in doing so. My own catalogue is - thanks heavens - nearing done - only part of W. and the

when addressing the British Institution Trustees on the subject of their trust fund in 1887, for example, Burton writing amenable to Scharf that he had 'drafted a letter to them expressing our views on the subject, & glancing at the Scheme of the Charity Commissions - I suppose the N.P.G is also going to do something of the same kind. Possibly it may interest you to see the line I have taken, I enclose my first rough jottings...please return the notes at your leisure'.<sup>278</sup> Most frequently they would alert one another to - and assist one another with - pictures of possible interest for respective collections.<sup>279</sup> Scharf advised directly on the high profile purchase of the so-called 'Longford Holbein' by the National Gallery in 1890;<sup>280</sup> his close knowledge of the collection at Longford Castle, consolidated whilst directing the Duchess of Radnor in the compilation of her collection catalogue from 1889, was of particular value (fig. 26).<sup>281</sup> In return Burton included Scharf closely in the acquisition process and the subsequent careful restoration of the picture, which he records seeing newly conserved in his diary for May 1891: 'To the National Gallery by Burton's invitation to see the change made in the Holbein from Longford by [William] Dyer's careful cleaning. The fine green damask curtain was revealed & a silver crucifix discovered at the extreme end to the left'.<sup>282</sup>

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one or two items in Z. remain to be completed'; NPG7/1/2/2/6/4, HAL. There is a copy of Burton's 1889 catalogue of the National Gallery's catalogue (Foreign Schools) in Scharf's library; see Frederic William Burton, *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Pictures in the National Gallery, with biographical notices of the Painters. Foreign Schools* (London: HMSO, 1889) [with note and clippings bound in], SL, HAL. See also Frederic William Burton to George Scharf, 8 Aug. 1887: 'Let me thank you for the copy of your last annual report which you so kindly sent me. I am surprised at the great number of acquisitions you have had to record - several of which are of very high interest' (NPG7/1/1/3/5, HAL).

<sup>278</sup> Frederic William Burton to George Scharf, 9 Nov. 1885, NPG7/1/1/3/6, HAL. This relates to an offer by the British Institution to transfer of a portion of its funds to the Trustees of both Galleries.

<sup>279</sup> For example, in 1880, Burton draws Scharf's attention to a 'very faithful' portrait of 'our fine old friend' William Boxall in possession of art connoisseur Federico Sacchi; see Frederic William Burton to George Scharf, 3 Jan. 1880, RP 937, HAL. In 1890 he introduced Sacchi to Scharf and two years later the Gallery purchased the picture [NPG 937]; see Susanna Avery-Quash and Silvia Davoli, 'Boxall Is Interested Only in the Great Masters...Well, We'll See about That!': William Boxall, Federico Sacchi and Cremonese Art at the National Gallery', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28, no. 2 (Jul. 1, 2016), p.10.

<sup>280</sup> See, for example, George Scharf, personal diary, 8 May 1890: 'Dinner Lady Layard...Burton & Sidney Colvin & Sir William Gregory there too...I had much conversation with Burton after dinner and with Colvin upon the Holbein at Longford'; NPG7/3/1/47, HAL.

<sup>281</sup> Peter Mandler notes that Lady Radnor enlisted the services of a 'battery of experts' when creating a catalogue *raisonné* of the pictures at Longford and suggests that the motivation for this project lay in the newly-interested attitude of the aristocracy towards the value of their art collections, from the 1880s onwards (see Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home*, p.127). Radnor classed Scharf as a special friend and, acknowledging his valuable assistance, she affectionately recalls: 'He was a dear old man, and when writing to me, would sign himself 'George Scharf, Master of the Pictures of the Queen of Longford. Or, if in a rush, simply, 'M.P.Q.L' (Radnor, *From a Great-Grandmother's Armchair*, p.179). The final years of Scharf's diaries contain accounts of numerous trips to Longford Castle, for example: '...the great Holbein was taken down from the wall & placed on the floor at an angle. Copied the inscription & made careful notes'; George Scharf, personal diary, 25 Oct. 1889, NPG7/3/1/46, HAL.

<sup>282</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 5 May 1891, NPG7/3/1/48, HAL.



In the last 10 years of Scharf's career John Miller Gray, the first Curator of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, figured with increasing significance in his social and professional circles (fig. 27). Already a prolific writer on art, Gray was appointed to the Gallery by the Board of Manufactures in 1884, where his job description was very similar to Scharf's despite the disparity in titles. Whilst responsible for the cataloguing and display of the nascent collection across various temporary premises, Gray was also charged with sourcing and evaluating potential acquisitions. To this end he would make occasional trips to London, also taking the opportunity to visit Scharf at home and contribute to his lively gatherings.<sup>283</sup> In August 1887 Scharf stayed with Gray during a two-week research trip to Edinburgh, where he also inspected the progress of the SNPG's new building on Queen Street (fig. 28).<sup>284</sup> For the rest of the time they maintained an affectionate correspondence that reveals the informal nature of their professional co-dependency. Gray would ask Scharf to view Scottish and other portraits up for sale at Christie's and give his opinion long-distance as to their suitability for the Edinburgh institution. After one such request Gray expresses his gratitude for Scharf's willing assistance as proxy researcher, and underlines his dependence upon an expert contact in the capital: 'I hope I am not trespassing quite unduly upon your time & kindness by all these enquiries, but we are very much isolated here, & have the greatest difficulty in getting reliable information as to what, in our way, is going on in London'.<sup>285</sup> Likewise, Gray assisted with Scharf's continuing research into pictures of Mary Queen of Scots, on one occasion visiting

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<sup>283</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, 20 Jan. 1889, 14 Jan. 1890; 16 Jun. 1890: '[Sunday] J.M. Gray came, & then Lindsay & then Franks, lively supper'; and 21 May 1893; NPG7/3/1/46–50, HAL. In response to a proposed trip to London, Scharf exclaims: 'I shall be charmed to see you & full glad that there is a prospect of your coming among us for a while...I wish to secure you for my plain dinner at 8 o'clock on Saty the 26. Quite in Bohemian fashion; perhaps to meet only my "Donny" - O'Donoghue & [Laurence Gifford] Holland, my clerk assistant. I wish to see as much of you as I can before you start for Italy. You must not disappoint me'. (George Scharf to John Miller Gray, 10 Feb. 1887, NG7/5/16/25, NRS).

<sup>284</sup> Scharf spent time making notes and sketches of the SNPG's collection; see SSB 114, NPG7/3/4/2/129, pp.60–3, HAL and TSB 34, NPG7/1/3/1/2/30, pp.7–13, HAL. See, for example, George Scharf, personal diary, 20 Aug. 1887: 'To the N.P.G to meet Gray & had two of the Hamilton pictures taken down for closer examination' (NPG7/3/1/44, HAL). A week later, back in London, Scharf writes to Gray after checking his notes on other pictures of the Duke of Hamilton: 'I find that the Blenheim portrait by Mytens called the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Hamilton, wore a grey stripped dress with grey slashes on the sleeves...His right hand at his hip rested (as in your N.P.G picture) on a stick' (George Scharf to John Miller Gray, 28 Aug. 1887, NG7/5/8/3, NRS). See also, Chapter 1 and figs. 8 & 8a.

<sup>285</sup> John Miller Gray to George Scharf (transcript), 9 Jul. 1886, NG7/4/1, NRS. See also John Miller Gray to George Scharf, 27 Apr. 1886: '[on SNPG headed paper] Have you seen, or will you see the Scottish portraits, removed from Leslie House, which are to be sold at Christie's on Monday? If so, could you kindly telegraph me to 25 York Place, Edinburgh, whether they are worth coming up to see & whether I could probably expend £50 at the sale to the advantage of the above Gallery?; letter pasted into Scharf's annotated Christie's catalogue, 3 May 1886, SL, HAL. Scharf responds: 'On receipt of your note I went to Christies. The portraits are mostly poor & in bad condition. They are mainly half length the size of life and all genuine [there follows short reports on three of the pictures]' (George Scharf to John Miller Gray, 28 Apr. 1886, NG7/5/13/19, NRS).

Holyrood Palace on request and reporting back with details of a portrait Scharf had studied there four years previously: 'My dear G.S, I took a run down to Holyrood this morning - the eyes are of an amber-brown, getting lighter towards the pupils. The hair is a darker & richer shade of the same colour' (Figs. 29 & 29a).<sup>286</sup> Gray recognized Scharf as his closest professional equivalent, yet far from a one-sided flow of advice from the more experienced of the two, it is clear that influence extended both ways. The inclusion of a letter from Gray in Scharf's 1884 edition of the NPG collection catalogue, bound with subsequent corrections, neatly illustrates the reciprocal nature of their relationship:

Will you pardon my enclosing a note of one or two things (very slight) that have caught my eye in going through your new catalogue. I know how gladly I would receive any such hints from you in my own case & I may presently have need for them when I send you a copy of our new catalogue in the proofs of which I am now immersed.<sup>287</sup>

Identifiable throughout the correspondence is both the strength of their friendship and the closeness of their scholarly interests, Gray's becoming increasingly antiquarian and historical as his career progressed. Writing in thanks for a copy of an article about Scharf in the *Art Journal*, as part of its series 'The Chiefs of our National Museums', the former enthusiastically proclaims '...[w]e should love each other, dear G.S - we two -, for we two are unique - So far as I know on all this round globe (still less on other planets known or not) are there any other specimens of that rarity of living organism - a Curator (Director - I forget) of a National Portrait Gallery'.<sup>288</sup> There is evidence of a conscious effort to pool resources to their

<sup>286</sup> John Miller Gray to George Scharf, 20 Jul. 1892, NPG7/3/3/20/3, HAL. This is a portrait on loan to Holyrood House Palace by the Duke of Hamilton, formerly thought to be a portrait of Mary Queen of Scots; ref. Cust, *Notes on Authentic Portraits of Mary Queen of Scots*, pp.131–32, pl.29. Gray maintained an interest in Scharf's project. The library of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery still holds Gray's copy of Scharf's concluding notice to *The Times* on portraits of Mary, sent to him by the latter. Also bound into the volume containing the cutting is Scharf's accompanying inscription: 'From G.S to his much valued friend J.M. Gray, 26 December 1888'. With thanks to Imogen Gibbon for providing this information (2016). See also John Miller Gray to George Scharf, 27 Dec. 1888, NPG7/3/3/20/3, HAL.

<sup>287</sup> John Miller Gray to George Scharf, 27 Apr. 1889, which concludes: 'Fear I shall not get to London this Spring - sad if I don't see you & your circle...[with page of suggested amendments relating to Scottish sitters also included]'; see George Scharf, *Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts, &c. in the National Portrait Gallery, Exhibition Road, South Kensington* (London: HMSO, 1884) [bound with cuttings and corrections for 1889 edition], HAL. At the sale of Scharf's library following his death, one lot not acquired for the NPG describes 5 volumes by Gray, including the 'Catalogue of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery', with 'MS. notes of Sir G. Scharf, autograph letter of compiler & c. inserted, 1885'; see *Catalogue of the Fine and Miscellaneous Library and Collection of Engravings of the late Sir George Scharf*, Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 7–11 Feb. 1896, copy SL, HAL. The correspondence suggests that Scharf and Gray also swapped Gallery reports: 'Many thanks for your annual report which I have looked at with much interest. That seems a cheap lot, the 21 heads by [George] Hayter [NPG 883(1–21)]'; John Miller Gray to George Scharf, 17 Jul. 1892, NPG7/3/3/20/3, HAL. These drawings were purchased for £10.10s.

<sup>288</sup> John Miller Gray to George Scharf, 6 Oct. 1891, NPG7/3/5/1/6, HAL, original emphasis. See J.F. Boyes, 'The Chiefs of our National Museums. No. VI - The National Portrait Gallery. Mr George Scharf', *Art Journal*, 1891, pp.296–99, which contains a reproduction of William Walter Ouless's portrait of Scharf [NPG 985] (p.297). Scharf

mutual advantage. This is the case with their independent research into the work of portraitist Cornelius Johnson; specifically the varied application of his signature. On one occasion in 1887, Gray includes the following account:

I had a delightful day at Duns Castle recently...I discovered a portrait, to waist, of a lady signed "Jonson" in a similar manner to the portrait of Dukes of Hamilton & Lonsdale; the only difference being that Cornelius is not written in full but given thus "Cor" & the "V.C [van Ceulen]" is larger in both letters...Some day, when you really have time, I should greatly like to get from your notes of the other signatures & marks of Jonson known to you & of the pictures bearing them.<sup>289</sup>

Scharf inserted this letter into his volume of Horace Walpole's *Anecdotes of painting in England* (1849 edition), at the section dealing with Johnson. Bound in with it are a number of notes on the artist including his own list detailing differing occurrences of Johnson's name in chronological order, with cross-references to these inscriptions as recorded in his sketchbook drawings. It is not clear whether Scharf forwarded this information to Gray, but the following year Scharf responds in detail on the subject, indicating their ongoing efforts to compile a template for attribution:

I have been spending 3 days or so very pleasantly at Boughton House, all among the Montagues and the Brudenells. Here is a very good and clear signature of our friend, who spells his name with an h, and leaves out all indications of Van Ceulen, 'Cornelius Johnson. fecit 1630'. It is inscribed in black letters on flat plain blue grey. I discovered it by the first word, close under the right side of the frame & we found the rest along the thickness of the stretching frame & folded around at the back. All this was of course hidden from view.<sup>290</sup>

Although not established until 1882 the Scottish National Portrait Gallery moved into its purpose-built gallery before the London institution, in 1889, within which Gray's hang of the early collection was highly regarded.<sup>291</sup> In a published tribute following the younger man's

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sent a cabinet card photograph after this portrait on request, which is visible, framed, hanging on the wall of Gray's study in a photograph of 1895 (copy SNPG Reference Section, SPH VI 1133-1).

<sup>289</sup> John Miller Gray to George Scharf, 19 Dec. 1887; see Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England...new edition revised with additional notes by Ralph N. Wornum*, 6 vols. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1849) [letter bound in to section on 'Cornelius Jonson', vol. 1], SL, HAL.

<sup>290</sup> George Scharf to John Miller Gray, 22 Sep. 1888, NG7/5/22/6, NRS.

<sup>291</sup> J.L. Caw, 'Gray, John Miller (1850–1894)', rev. Nicola Kalinsky, *ODNB* (OUP, 2004); <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11345>, accessed 24 Sep. 2015. See also John Miller Gray to George Scharf, 6 May 1889: 'I was truly delighted to read that statement of Lord Salisbury's at the R.A. Banquet in today's paper. Please let me offer my heartiest congratulations. It must be a very great satisfaction for you to think that now, at last, there is definite prospect of all the treasures you have collected with so much skill & care, being worthily housed; & I already contemplate the pleasure of examining them "in the neighborhood of Charing Cross"...We hope to be open to the public in our new Gallery by the end of June. You, for your part, look forward to

untimely death in 1894 Scharf laments the loss of his ‘fellow-worker in the field of portraiture’ and ‘most genial companion’, noting his thwarted intention to call on Gray’s skilled assistance in arranging the NPG’s portraits at St Martin’s Place, a task which still lay ahead. In praising here Gray’s qualifications for and dedication to his curatorial role, Scharf could have been describing himself: ‘Gray was devoted to History. He had a strong natural perception of form (an essential qualification for the identification of likeness), a quick memory, and indomitable energy and sagacity in penetrating the origin and groundwork of whatever came before him’.<sup>292</sup> Indeed throughout this chapter, far from asserting his uniqueness, I have attempted to position Scharf within a network of like-minded individuals with whom he engaged in a culture of shared expertise, ideas and information. This approach is epitomized through his interaction with Gray, Burton and Franks. United in their commitment to their professional roles, these men together carved out a model for art historical research, institutional collecting and wider museum practice in Britain, during the latter part of the Victorian period.<sup>293</sup>

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a similarly good time before long - I am glad you have now the prospect’; NPG7/2/7/1/3, HAL. On Scharf’s interest in the Edinburgh building, see Duncan Thomson, *A History of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 2011), p.32.

<sup>292</sup> George Scharf, ‘The Late Mr. J.M. Gray’, *The Athenaeum*, 16 Jun. 1894, p.781.

<sup>293</sup> Unfortunately these individuals were largely all men. In her recent work, Kate Hill explores the difficulties experienced by women who tried to pursue traditionally ‘masculine’ careers in science and curatorship during the nineteenth century, and assesses the wider contribution made by women to the museum sphere; see Kate Hill, *Women and Museums, 1850–1914: Modernity and the Gendering of Knowledge* (Manchester: MUP, 2017).

### Chapter 3

#### **‘I always receive instructions from my Lords & Masters’; collaboration, negotiations, and key relationships amongst early National Portrait Gallery Trustees.**

The title quote captures the manner in which George Scharf often jovially referred to the Gallery’s Board of Trustees in correspondence with his peers, and also the way he officially positioned himself in relation to their authority.<sup>294</sup> This chapter explores the reality of Scharf’s interactions with various NPG Trustees and examines the nature of his relationships with specific figures between the dates of his tenure. Lara Perry has argued that, certainly with regards to the formation of the collection, Scharf ‘should be regarded as an agent of the Trustees rather than an agent in his own right’.<sup>295</sup> As considered in Chapter 1, I similarly acknowledge Scharf’s lack of executive power with regards to the acquisition process, but reason here that his increasingly active role in sourcing and fielding portraits for inspection by the Board ensured his indirect control over the shaping of the Gallery’s collection. Furthermore, I argue that this was just one manifestation of Scharf’s individual agency, which became ever more pronounced over the course of his career, and centred on his expertise in British portraiture and authority relating to matters of contemporary museum practice.<sup>296</sup> Focusing in particular upon Scharf’s early collaboration with two ‘expert’ Trustees - William Smith and William Hookham Carpenter - and his engagement with successive Chairmen of the Board - Philip Stanhope and Charles Stewart Hardinge - I chart Scharf’s transition from fulfilling a subordinate role, to commanding the respect and genuine affection of the Trustees. In so doing, I also investigate Scharf’s extraordinary assimilation into aristocratic circles and the resulting implications for his professional practice.

#### **3.1 A close collaboration: expert assistance from William Smith and William Hookham Carpenter**

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<sup>294</sup> See George Scharf to John Miller Gray, 29 Jun. 1892, NG7/5/39/33, NRS. Scharf in this instance was referring to not buying anything for the collection on his ‘own hook’.

<sup>295</sup> Perry, *Facing Femininities*, p.24, n.29.

<sup>296</sup> Perry does recognize that in terms of portraiture research, the Trustees were increasingly able to rely on Scharf’s diligence and expertise; see Perry, *History’s Beauties*, p.149.

Andrea Geddes Poole has most recently addressed the constitution of the National Portrait Gallery's nineteenth-century Board of Trustees, noting that in contrast to the National Gallery's Board - which was almost exclusively composed of members of the aristocracy - its make-up was decidedly democratic, being 'almost an even split between the aristocratic and the learned'.<sup>297</sup> This is because appointments were made not only on the basis of social and political calibre, but also upon an individual's ability to determine the historical significance of a sitter or the quality of a likeness (see Chapter 1). A number of founding Trustees were selected for their prowess in aspects of British history, such as Thomas Babington Macaulay, Sir Francis Palgrave and Thomas Carlyle, whilst others were valued for their 'vocational knowledge of matters relating to portraiture'.<sup>298</sup> These included William Smith, former print seller and authority on engraved historic portraits; his friend and associate William Hookham Carpenter, Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum; and Sir Charles Eastlake, Director of the National Gallery and President of the Royal Academy. Susanna Avery-Quash and Julie Sheldon suggest that although Eastlake was an 'assiduous' NPG Trustee, he and Scharf did not appear to be personally close.<sup>299</sup> This was perhaps due to the disparity in age and achievement; Eastlake in the 1860s was nearing the end of his illustrious career in the public art world, whilst Scharf was just embarking upon his own.<sup>300</sup>

The reverse was true of Scharf's relationships with Smith and Carpenter, with whom he formed a close bond during the first two decades after taking up his post in October 1857. The men were also united through their active membership of the Society of Antiquaries; all three were elected Fellows in 1852 and served at various times on the Society's Council. Smith was appointed Deputy Chairman of the NPG Board in 1858 and devoted considerable time to the Gallery, only missing five out of 136 Trustees' meetings before his untimely death in 1876.<sup>301</sup> In the 1840s he and his brother George Smith were responsible for selling to the

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<sup>297</sup> Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p.30. For a comprehensive account of the shifting constitution of the NPG's exclusively male Board of 11 Trustees over the length of Scharf's career, see also Lara Perry's appendix: 'The Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, 1856–1900', in Perry, *History's Beauties*, pp.148–154.

<sup>298</sup> Perry, *History's Beauties*, p.149.

<sup>299</sup> Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation*, p.120. On Eastlake and Scharf's relationship, see also Chapter 2.

<sup>300</sup> On Eastlake's career see also Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World*.

<sup>301</sup> See minutes of the 137<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 9 Feb. 1877, NPG 1/3, p. 75, HAL, in which Smith's death is recorded: 'The Trustees had on all matters associated with art, and more especially for establishing identification in portraiture, so constantly experienced...the willing aid and counsel of their late Colleague, that his loss to them may almost be deemed irreparable'. Here it is erroneously recorded that Smith missed just 1 meeting during his tenure.

British Museum important collections of early German and Italian engravings, effectively establishing the museum's holdings in these areas. In total they sold five groups of material to the Department of Prints and Drawings, with William Smith taking the lead in the transactions and providing the public face of the firm.<sup>302</sup> His central contact at the museum was William Hookham Carpenter, who joined the department as Keeper in 1845. Smith also became a close friend of Carpenter and his family, as the personal tone and content of his numerous letters preserved at the museum attest.<sup>303</sup> Having garnered a considerable reputation as a scholar of art and print connoisseur, Carpenter was responsible for establishing an important network of relations with private collectors during his career, which resulted in numerous donations to the department following his death in 1866.<sup>304</sup> Scharf relied considerably on the professional expertise offered by these individuals in the initial years of his secretaryship, as he was consolidating his own specialism in researching and authenticating British portraiture.<sup>305</sup> He drew repeatedly upon their knowledge and contacts amongst picture dealers and the wider art world. The sourcing of possible acquisitions for the National Portrait Gallery during this period can be described as a truly collaborative effort, and the Gallery's archive contains multiple examples of notes and letters alerting one another to pictures of interest spotted at dealerships, auction houses and in private collections across London.

Of the two men, Smith provided the more constant and immediate assistance; his retirement from the print selling business in 1848 enabled him to focus on his commitment to the NPG and other honorary public work, whereas Carpenter was often detained by his responsibilities at the Museum. This is reflected in the frequency of correspondence between Smith and Scharf, in which they intricately discuss the merits of a particular picture and seek one another's advice. The following excerpts exemplify their lively – in some cases, daily – interaction in the pursuit of genuine portraits for the national collection. Scharf is interested in Smith's opinion on the merits of two pictures of author and lexicographer Samuel Johnson, although in this instance neither was acquired by the Gallery:

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<sup>302</sup> See Griffiths, *Landmarks in Print Collecting*, p.97; see also E.I. Carlyle, 'Smith, William (1808–1876)', rev. Mary Guyatt, *ODNB* (OUP, 2004); <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25933?docPos=33>, accessed 21 Apr. 2016.

<sup>303</sup> See, for example, William Smith to William Hookham Carpenter, 12 Sep. 1857, Departmental Letter Book, 1857, P&D, BM.

<sup>304</sup> See Griffiths, *Landmarks in Print Collecting*, p.13.

<sup>305</sup> Interestingly, both Carpenter and Smith also undertook stints as NPG Secretary; the former prior to Scharf's appointment in 1857, and the latter during Scharf's extended illness in 1874.

On looking over some of my old sketches of 1856 I was struck with a memorandum taken at Mr. Brett's of a portrait of Dr. Johnson exactly similar in point of attitude & comparison to the one which the Trustees had before them from a Glasgow gentleman. I at once wrote to Mr [John Watkins] Brett and ascertained from him that the picture is still in his keeping. I have seen it this morning & find it is very superior to the Cribb concoction. There are still many faults to be found with the drawing and it is not Sir Joshua [Reynolds]: but extremely interesting. I long for you to see it.<sup>306</sup>

Following an opportunity to view the portrait, Smith responds to Scharf with characteristic interest:

I couldn't get to Brett's yesterday, as I was detained all morning at Miss Goodrich's. I have however just returned from Hanover Square after a long interview with Dr Johnson, the picture very much improves upon further acquaintance with it, and I shall be pleased to see it placed in our collection. I am very much puzzled about the painter. When Sir Charles Eastlake saw it, with me, about two years ago, he seemed to think that it might be by [John] Opie. The head and the hands have considerable resemblance to Sir Joshua's painting, but the other portions of the picture cannot be by him. I quite agree with you that the Glasgow-Cribb offence is manufactured from it.<sup>307</sup>

Yet Carpenter also regularly made time to join Scharf and Smith on visits to look at a picture together, so that they could confer directly over its suitability for inspection by the Trustees.<sup>308</sup> In a letter to Smith of 1866, Scharf reports on the precarious (and indeed, terminal) condition of Carpenter's health after a visit to his residence at the British Museum, also underlining his reliance on the elder man's experience: 'Poor Carpenter's state much distresses me, for, with all his crotches, he is a man whose services we shall miss very much'.<sup>309</sup> As with many of Scharf's associates, alongside the professional activities of these men existed a firm bond of personal friendship that transcended issues of rank, position or experience. This is illustrated, for example, by the carte-de-visite of Carpenter owned by Scharf and dated by him 27 October

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<sup>306</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 11 Apr. 1863, NPG20/3, HAL, original emphasis. The Glasgow portrait is first recorded in the Register of Offers as belonging to William Ker and is attributed to John Opie (6 Jun. 1862, LIV F1, NPG85/2/1, HAL). For Scharf's sketch of this picture see TSB 7, p.24 (NPG7/3/1/2/7, HAL); and for his earlier record of Brett's portrait, see SSB 45, p.45 (NPG7/3/4/2/53, HAL).

<sup>307</sup> William Smith to George Scharf, 12 May 1863, NPG7/1/1/4/2/6, HAL. Scharf recommended that Brett submit his picture for consideration by the Trustees, although in this instance they rejected the acquisition. The reason for this is not recorded, but may have hinged on the price, which was set at £120.

<sup>308</sup> For example, see William Hookham Carpenter to George Scharf, 28 Mar. 1859, having referred to his diary for the previous year: 'I find that you were present at the meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> June & that Smith yourself & I went to the Admiralty after it was over to see a portrait of [Samuel] Pepys'; NPG7/1/1/4/2/2, HAL.

<sup>309</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 25 May 1866, NPG20/3, HAL. Carpenter died on 12 July that year. Scharf was also friendly with members of Carpenter's family, especially his second son Percy (1820–95), who was his exact contemporary.



1862, to mark the former's '45<sup>th</sup> wedding-day anniversary' (fig. 30).<sup>310</sup> Similarly, business correspondence between Scharf and Smith is also peppered with informal references and invitations, including Smith's annual insistence that Scharf join his birthday celebrations: 'Do you like expensive fish dinners at Greenwich? If yes, and you have no better engagement, I shall be very happy if you will oblige me with your company to meet a rather large party of my friends at the Ship Hotel on Saturday the 11th of July, at 5 precisely'.<sup>311</sup> An engraving of Smith in the National Portrait Gallery's collection neatly symbolizes the inter-connection between the three men (see fig. 31). Carpenter made this etching after an 1856 painting of Smith by his wife the portraitist Margaret Sarah Carpenter, which is also in the Gallery's collection [NPG 1692]. The impression was inscribed by Scharf following its presentation by George Smith in 1877, and marks the Deputy Chairman's 20 years' service to the NPG.

The activities of these men were supervised by the first Chairman of Trustees Lord Stanhope, who involved himself closely with all matters of Gallery business during his tenure, and was not always inclined to defer to their expert judgment in the first instance. Evidence in surviving correspondence between the two suggests that Smith and Scharf developed a pattern of working together during this early period to counter Stanhope's resistance and attempt to bring him round to their way of thinking, with regards to particular pictures. One obvious example is the case of a portrait of Mary Queen of Scots offered to the NPG in July 1860 by a Captain G. Beauclerc, who first addressed his offer in person to the Chairman and then in writing to the Secretary (fig. 32).<sup>312</sup> A letter from Smith to Scharf dated 6 July makes it clear that they shared reservations about the authenticity of the likeness and Stanhope's enthusiasm for it:

Be so good as to consider the whole of what follows as private and confidential. I wrote to Lord S. yesterday stating that the portrait was undoubtedly that of Queen Mary, but it was very improbable that it could have been painted from the life, and that it might probably be some copy from an original...On my return from Sydenham this evening I find Lord Stanhope's answer, which I will show to you tomorrow. It is a

<sup>310</sup> As inscribed by Scharf on the verso of NPG Ax5089. The photograph was likely presented to Scharf by Carpenter, although there is no evidence to confirm this.

<sup>311</sup> William Smith to George Scharf, 24 Jun. 1859, NPG7/1/1/4/2/2, HAL. To which Scharf responds: 'I receive your present kind invitation with more pleasure than ever...Believe me I appreciate kindness & respond to friendship & I think myself most fortunate in being able to roll masters & friends into one' (George Scharf to William Smith, 25 Jun. 1859, NPG 20/3, HAL).

<sup>312</sup> See Register of Offers, 5 Jul. 1860, XLI 2, NPG85/2/1, HAL. The vendor had initially asked for £100 for the portrait, but in his letter to Scharf the price was doubled to £200, which perhaps also influenced the Trustees' decision regarding the picture.

very kind one, and very flattering to me, but he evidently intends to force the picture upon us. This I mean to oppose, and I mean to write to him to that effect...Sir C. Eastlake and Mr Carpenter must come to the meeting, and I wish you could persuade Lord Lansdowne to look at this humbug before we meet.<sup>313</sup>

On 10 July Scharf reassures Smith that he has spoken with Stanhope on the subject, writing that he 'expressed my conviction about modern repainting &c. to the extent of the head-dress and ruff. This will gently prepare the way for your heavy onslaught'.<sup>314</sup> In fact, Scharf had already 'prepared the way' in a letter to the Chairman of 4 July, in which he agreed that the portrait represented Mary, but countered:

I must also candidly avow my decided opinion that this is not a contemporary picture. It is painted in a light facile manner with solid colours in a style not known in art before the days of Velasquez & Murillo. Velasquez was born seven years after the death of Mary and Murillo...was not born till her son James had been 13 years on the throne of England.<sup>315</sup>

In the face of this orchestrated campaign, Stanhope relinquishes his intention to acquire the portrait, responding to Scharf after receiving similar objections from Smith: 'I thank you for your just & discriminating criticism, & I have since heard from our Deputy Chairman to nearly the same effect'.<sup>316</sup> The picture was formerly inspected by the Board at a meeting on 24 July - at which both Eastlake and Carpenter were present according to Smith's request - and rejected.<sup>317</sup> Further examples of this coercion suggest that such teamwork became an established tactic, employed to the advantage of both men. This is illustrated, for example, in the casual manner with which Smith makes the following request of Scharf towards the end of a note marked 'private': 'Should you see Lord Stanhope will you be so good as to introduce him to a gentleman of whom he has never heard, namely [the engraver] Mr William Faithorne? I intend D.V mentioning his name on Friday, and should be glad if you can

<sup>313</sup> William Smith to George Scharf, 6 Jul. 1860, NPG7/1/1/4/2/4, HAL, original emphasis. Scharf was also in correspondence with Carpenter about this portrait, who reports: 'Mr Beauclerc has done me the honour of a visit this afternoon eager to prove the genuineness of his portrait...but I did not shrink from expressing my opinion which he will no doubt pronounce heretical & set me down as a cool specimen of impudence & ignorance & totally unfit to take my seat at the Board of Trustees at the N.P.G. I pity you who have to fight off such Gents'. (William Hookham Carpenter to George Scharf, 19 Jul. 1860, NPG7/1/1/4/2/3, HAL, original emphasis).

<sup>314</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 10 Jul. 1860, NPG20/3, HAL.

<sup>315</sup> George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 4 Jul. 1860, U1590/0186/6, KHLC.

<sup>316</sup> Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 6 Jul. 1860, NPG7/1/1/4/1/5, HAL.

<sup>317</sup> See minutes of the 41<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 24 Jul. 1860, NPG 1/1, p. 130, HAL.

conveniently *take the chill off first*'.<sup>318</sup> This strategy, however, was not unfailingly successful. As early as 1859 Scharf asks Smith to '[p]ray invite Lord Stanhope's attention' to some interesting British portraits then on display at Marlborough House (outsourced from the National Gallery's collection), which he regarded as 'certainly due to us'.<sup>319</sup> This Smith evidently did, afterwards forwarding Stanhope's response containing his disinclination to act upon this opportunity, to which Scharf replies:

I return your confidential enclosure with many thanks. The movements and motives of the higher powers are sometimes beyond our scan; but Ld Stanhope seems anxious to keep our independence as marked as possible & to show how far we can help ourselves...The Marlborough House portraits would have helped capitally to fill the upper floors [at Great George Street].<sup>320</sup>

### 3.2 Scharf's two Chairmen: Philip Stanhope and Charles Stewart Hardinge

In 1856 the historian and statesman Philip Henry, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl Stanhope successfully proposed a motion in the House of Lords to establish a collection of national portraits, having previously raised the idea in the Commons in 1846 and again in 1852 (fig. 33).<sup>321</sup> He became Chairman of the newly-established Board of Trustees in 1857, appointing Scharf as the NPG's first Secretary soon afterwards. Considering the extent of his parliamentary and other duties, the degree to which Stanhope concerned himself with the minutiae of the Gallery's operations certainly during the first decade of its existence, is remarkable.<sup>322</sup> Letters to Scharf during this period demonstrate his involvement in its daily management, as mentioned above. He regularly requests copies of the accounts and annual reports or sales figures for the collection catalogues, as well as sanctioning meetings and holidays for the Gallery's messenger, working with Scharf on devising Treasury estimates for the following year, and advising on the hanging of pictures and the provision of explanatory information at Great George Street (see Chapters

<sup>318</sup> William Smith to George Scharf, 13 Feb. 1860, NPG7/1/1/4/2/3, HAL, emphasis mine. The Trustees' meeting Smith refers to was held on 17 Feb. 1860, although there is no reference to Faithorne in the minutes.

<sup>319</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 5 Mar. 1859, NPG20/3, HAL, original emphasis.

<sup>320</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 11 Mar. 1859, NPG20/3, HAL. Scharf is presumably referring to members of the government, through his use of the term 'higher powers'.

<sup>321</sup> See Aubrey Newman, *The Stanhopes of Chevening: A Family Biography* (London; New York: Macmillan; St. Martin's Press, 1969), pp.272–3; and David Cannadine, *National Portrait Gallery: A Brief History* (London: NPG, 2007), pp.10–21

<sup>322</sup> Stanhope was President of the Society of Antiquaries from 1846 and also a trustee of the British Museum. Alongside a continuing literary output he was also involved in various royal and parliamentary commissions, including the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts from 1869.

4 and 5). It is interesting to ponder the extent to which this level of interest reflected his personal enthusiasm, or a desire to keep his new Secretary on a rather tight leash. The two men's acquaintance predated Scharf's appointment; as President of the Society of Antiquaries, Stanhope signed Scharf's certificate for election as Fellow in 1852 and also supported his election to the Athenaeum in 1855 (see Chapter 2).<sup>323</sup> Yet their professional relationship got off to a somewhat bumpy beginning with an initial confusion over Scharf's start date. Although having been granted a leave of absence until after the opening of the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in the first week of May 1857, the Trustees were perplexed by his non-attendance at their meeting on 11 May 'without any cause assigned'.<sup>324</sup> In his place Scharf sent a letter of the same date, which declares his general availability to assume his duties, but also requests permission to remain in Manchester for the duration of the exhibition in order to compile research notes for his new role.<sup>325</sup> On 16 May Stanhope wrote to Carpenter, then acting as Secretary in Scharf's place, insisting: 'Mr Scharf never called on me this day according to the request which I asked you to address to him. Nor have I heard from him. Be so good on Monday as to write to me giving me his address & informing also whether since our meeting you have heard from him or seen him'.<sup>326</sup> Once in post, Stanhope was generally approving of Scharf's activities, although was quick to call him up on occasions he believed he had overstepped the mark. A prominent example is his anger over Scharf's submitting at short notice information about the Gallery to the editors of the *Athenaeum* and *Notes & Queries*, without Stanhope's prior authority:

Now I must take the liberty of frankly telling you that as I conceive you, as secretary of the National Portrait Commission, are not entitled to send for publication any matter relative to the business of that Commission without the authority and permission of the Board...I protest against the course you have taken without the smallest sanction from the Board or from myself as present Chairman.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> See Michie and Warhol, *Love among the Archives*, p.21, n.14. See also Scharf's ballot paper for election to the Athenaeum; MEM/1/3/19, ACA.

<sup>324</sup> See minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 11 May 1857, NPG1/1, p.31, HAL.

<sup>325</sup> Scharf's involvement in the Manchester Exhibition - including his extended leave of absence until October 1857 to make sketches and notes of pictures in the Portrait Gallery - is explored in Chapter 4.

<sup>326</sup> Philip Stanhope to William Hookham Carpenter, 16 May 1857, NPG7/1/1/4/1/1, HAL.

<sup>327</sup> Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 18 Dec. 1857, NPG7/1/1/4/1/2, HAL. For Scharf's letter of 17 December informing Stanhope of his actions and intention to request his permission '[h]ad there been time', see U1590/O186/9, KHL.

The following day Scharf writes back, extremely contrite, and pained at having transgressed ‘the limits that I ought to have observed in giving information to the public press’.<sup>328</sup> Despite his early schemes to subtly influence the Chairman by colluding with Smith, it seems that Scharf’s respect for his superior was genuine and, in this instance, his horror at having offended him very real.

In examining the relationship between Stanhope and Scharf, Helena Michie and Robyn Warhol identify a turning point in the nature of their interactions, when the dynamic begins to shift from that of master and subordinate, towards personal friendship (almost) between equals. They pinpoint a letter in the Chairman’s correspondence that strikes a markedly different tone to the formal missives that precede it, and concerns a trip the two took in July 1858: ‘I thought our day at Canterbury very pleasant & I hope that you may have found it so. But there was certainly a drawback in our bad & scanty dinner’.<sup>329</sup> Although the reason for the visit is not clear, this excerpt does indeed appear to signify a transition that is perhaps also reflected in Stanhope’s simple alteration to the form of his address going forward, from ‘My dear Sir’ to ‘My dear Mr Scharf’. From this point on, Scharf’s diaries record regular extended visits to Chevening, Stanhope’s country home near Sevenoaks in Kent, where he is received not just in his official capacity, but also as a favoured family guest.<sup>330</sup> For example, in his yearly round-up of significant events for 1859, Scharf notes: ‘Lord & Lady Stanhope several times invited me to Chevening & especially on the occasion of Lord Mahon’s coming of age, their friendship was strikingly shown’.<sup>331</sup> Chevening itself came to play an important role in Scharf’s life; he spent countless hours making notes on its pictures, researching in its extensive library, or socializing with a succession of aristocratic house guests. Writing movingly to Stanhope in 1868 upon presenting him with a facsimile copy of Shakespeare’s First Folio for the library as ‘tribute of my esteem and grateful devotion to your Lordship’, he asserts: ‘your permission to

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<sup>328</sup> George Scharf to Philip Stanhope (draft), 19 Dec. 1857, NPG7/1/1/4/1/2, HAL. This is also quoted by Elizabeth Coutts as an example of Scharf’s lack of autonomy at this time: see Coutts, *Between History and Art*, pp.45–6.

<sup>329</sup> Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 4 Aug. 1858, NPG7/1/1/4/1/4, HAL. See Michie and Warhol, *Love among the Archives*, pp.200–202.

<sup>330</sup> See, for example George Scharf, personal diary, 12–6 Sep. 1859 & 7–19 Dec. 1864, NPG7/3/1/16 & 21, HAL. He also regularly received presents of game sent from Chevening, at Christmas and during the shooting season. On Scharf at Chevening, see also Michael I. Wilson, *A House of Distinction: The Stanhopes and Chevening* (Sevenoakes, Kent: M.I. Wilson, 2011), p.89.

<sup>331</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 1 Jan. 1860, NPG7/3/1/17, HAL.

add a single seed to the Granaries of knowledge laid up at Chevening would afford me the fullest gratification'.<sup>332</sup>

Stanhope continued to steer the management of the National Portrait Gallery with a firm hand, yet it is also evident that he began to place increasing faith in Scharf's professional abilities. In 1860, for instance, he both praises Scharf's intervention in the hang and values his advice: 'I can suggest no better arrangement for the new pictures than that which you have made. I will bring your hint about Somerset House [as a location for the Gallery] under the notice of the Chancellor of the Exchequer'.<sup>333</sup> Furthermore, in 1864 Stanhope clearly surprises Scharf by enquiring whether he has any 'special remarks' that he desired to be inserted into the Trustees' 7<sup>th</sup> annual report to the Treasury. Scharf responds with gratitude and in fact suggests an extension to the opening hours 'to those adopted by all other public Galleries'.<sup>334</sup> Revised opening from 10 until 5 o'clock was readily approved at the next Trustees' meeting, and is duly listed in the official report.<sup>335</sup> Towards the end of Stanhope's life his confidence in Scharf's expertise becomes more apparent as he ceded further control over the running of the Gallery to his Secretary. A decided absence of correspondence concerning details of the move to South Kensington in 1869, for example, perhaps indicates that to a large extent he allowed Scharf to make his own decisions regarding the arrangement of the portraits and the articulation of the collection in this new space (see Chapter 4). Stanhope's death on 24 December 1875 came as a huge shock to Scharf, which Stanhope's son anticipated. Announcing the news in a telegram to William Smith on the same day, he requested that he 'break this to Scharf'.<sup>336</sup> The latter was himself suffering from a period of ill health and Smith reported back that he did so on the same afternoon 'as gradually and delicately as I could', though Scharf was of course 'extremely afflicted'.<sup>337</sup> As opposed to the deaths of other acquaintances, which are largely recorded in Scharf's diary without comment, this event receives repeated attention. He returns to the date of death to write a retrospective entry, for instance, chronicling the details of his last moments with Stanhope and concluding: 'I feel most

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<sup>332</sup> George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 5 Dec. 1868, C315/26, KHL.

<sup>333</sup> Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 3 Dec. 1860, NPG7/1/1/4/1/6, HAL.

<sup>334</sup> George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 6 Apr. 1864 (draft), NPG7/1/1/4/1/8, HAL.

<sup>335</sup> See George Scharf, 18 Apr. 1864, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1864*, p.3, HAL.

<sup>336</sup> Arthur Philip Stanhope to William Smith, 24 Dec. 1875 (telegram), NPG20/2, HAL.

<sup>337</sup> William Smith to Arthur Philip Stanhope, 24 Dec. 1875, U1950/C529/2, KHL.

grateful to have been allowed latterly to be so intimate with him, & rejoice that I gave up all other engagements & invitations to be with him at Chevening. I never had a better or truer friend'.<sup>338</sup> Elsewhere Scharf laments Stanhope's demise and calls him his 'best friend', an extraordinary description considering the huge social disparity between them.<sup>339</sup> In the weeks following his death Scharf began a pencil drawing of Stanhope seated in the President's chair at the Society of Antiquaries, when at Somerset House. This he returned to on a number of occasions, further defining the details of the posthumous likeness in ink (fig. 34).<sup>340</sup> The exercise is akin to Michie and Warhol's analysis of Scharf's work on a drawing of his mother, immediately after her death in January 1869, as an attempt to 'manage the pain of the moment...with his almost reflexive need to draw'.<sup>341</sup> Even at the end of his own life in 1895, these feelings had not altered, as he reveals in a letter to the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl Stanhope:

I had a most touching letter from Mrs Stanhope at Revesby [Abbey] some time ago, very near the anniversary of that dreadful event which we all in an undiminished degree deplore. The morning when the news came to me is vivid in my recollection. The Gallery has never been the same to me since.<sup>342</sup>

A very different tenor of relationship between Scharf and his Chairman characterized the second half of his career, with the appointment of politician Charles Stewart Hardinge to fill the vacant position in 1876. At this point Scharf had almost 20 years' experience under his belt and it is clear that from the outset, Hardinge was much more accepting of - and reliant upon - his expertise in both British portraiture and the running of the Gallery. The two were near contemporaries, but by no means social equals; Hardinge succeeded to the peerage in 1856 as second Viscount Hardinge of Lahore and served as Under-Secretary for War in Lord Derby's administration between 1858 and 1859, though he didn't hold office again.<sup>343</sup>

<sup>338</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 12 Nov. 1875, NPG7/3/1/32, HAL, original emphasis.

<sup>339</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, Jan. 1875 (endpaper), NPG7/3/1/33, HAL.

<sup>340</sup> Scharf based his portrait on a variant pose of NPG301(7) (fig. 33). See also George Scharf, personal diary, 17 Jan. 1875: 'Finishing my pencil drawing of Lord Stanhope begun on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Sent it on to Franks to look at'; NPG7/3/1/33, HAL.

<sup>341</sup> See Michie and Warhol, *Love among the Archives*, p.150.

<sup>342</sup> George Scharf to Arthur Philip Stanhope, 9 Jan. 1895, U1950/C541/4, KHLC.

<sup>343</sup> J.S. Cotton, 'Hardinge, Charles Stewart, second Viscount Hardinge of Lahore (1822–1894)', rev. H.C.G. Matthew, *ODNB* (OUP, 2004); <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12268>, accessed 18 May 2016. Hardinge was also elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1877, seemingly after Scharf's encouragement; see Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 11 Feb. 1877: 'With regard to the S of Antiquaries perhaps you will let me think over it a little – I am a little doubtful whether I sd. join unless I were sure of being able to attend pretty regularly' (NPG7/1/1/4/1/13, HAL).

However their friendship, already referred to in Chapter 2, was sincere and familiar. They appear to have bonded over shared artistic interests; Hardinge was himself a keen amateur watercolourist, having been brought up amongst such figures as the artists Sir Francis Grant and Sir Edwin Henry Landseer. In a letter to Smith of 1869, Scharf describes one of his first visits to South Park, Hardinge's country home in Penshurst in Kent, and praises his capabilities: 'My noble host is...really an indefatigable man at the pencil. He is a good colourist and remarkably rapid with the brush'.<sup>344</sup> South Park would become a regular retreat for Scharf, his visits there becoming more frequent even than those to the Stanhope family at Chevening (although considering the proximity of the two houses, he would often combine trips to both).<sup>345</sup> Scharf occasionally brought with him official papers to consult with the Chairman on Gallery business, but his diaries during these periods more often record his participation in social activities with friends and family.<sup>346</sup> Hardinge had a large family of five sons and three daughters, but his wife had died in 1864 and he didn't remarry; he thus regularly sought out Scharf's company. Writing to him from South Park in October 1878, for example, Hardinge adds: '...We have lovely weather here and I wish you were here to finish your sketch and do another'.<sup>347</sup> A drawing in Scharf's sketchbook shows Hardinge relaxing at home in 1887 (see fig. 35). Scharf depicts him in the act of drawing or painting, his artist's palette at his side, registering their common interest. The fact that Scharf allowed Hardinge to sketch corresponding portraits of him on nearby pages - the only other hand identifiable throughout his personal sketchbooks - testifies to the strength of their friendship (see, for example, fig. 36).<sup>348</sup>

The ease and familiarity with which Hardinge and Scharf interacted on a personal level, transferred also to their professional relationship. Although an attentive and involved NPG

<sup>344</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 5 Apr. 1869, NPG20/3, HAL. This is the year following Hardinge's appointment as NPG Trustee in 1868. See also personal diary, 3-7 Apr. 1869 (NPG7/3/1/26, HAL).

<sup>345</sup> Unfortunately South Park was largely destroyed in the 1980s, whereas Chevening was gifted to the nation in 1940 by the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl Stanhope, for use as the Foreign Secretary's official residence.

<sup>346</sup> For example, Scharf usually attended the annual garden party at South Park, which he enjoyed. A sketchbook drawing by Hardinge depicts Scharf recording the scene at one such gathering in 1883, and is fondly inscribed 'our artist'; see NPG7/3/4/2/133, p.70v. Scharf's diaries contain many references to staying up late at South Park, chatting with 'Lord H.' (see George Scharf, personal diary, 16 Nov. 1878 & 29 Sep. 1888, NPG7/3/1/35 & 45, HAL).

<sup>347</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 3 Oct. 1878, NPG7/1/1/4/1/14, HAL. Hardinge is possibly referring to sketches of South Park and Penshurst executed in September 1878 (see SSB 97, NPG7/3/4/2/112, pp.61-5, HAL).

<sup>348</sup> In 1894 Scharf records Hardinge's death in his diary in capital letters, adding 'Very unsettled all afternoon by sad accounts of Lord Hardinge. The telegraph [from his daughter] closed all'; George Scharf, personal diary, 28 Jul. 1894, NPG7/3/1/51, HAL. Lionel Cust writes to Scharf on the same day: 'I feel sure that you will be feeling the loss of so old a friend' (Lionel Cust to George Scharf, 28 Jul. 1894, NPG7/1/1/4/2/16, HAL).



Chairman, Hardinge's approach towards overseeing the running of the Gallery was decidedly hands-off. Whilst Stanhope's letters to Scharf frequently deliver instructions without room for discussion or negotiation, Hardinge's notes often seek Scharf's opinion on a correct course of action, ask his advice about the execution of particular official procedures or simply praise his curatorial interventions after the event. This is both reflective of Hardinge's recognition of Scharf's proficiency and symptomatic of the latter's increasing autonomy within his own role. In contrast to Stanhope's close control over the production of the early NPG collection catalogues, for example, Hardinge responds to Scharf's proofs of the extended 1881 edition with a simple affirmation of his efforts: 'I have read over the rough drafts of yr. catalogue and quite approve'.<sup>349</sup> He likewise extended this attitude towards the various re-displays of the portraits during the 15 years at South Kensington, relying on Scharf to successfully incorporate new acquisitions into the chronological hang in illustration of a larger historical progression. As is considered in Chapter 4, however, it is clear that Hardinge actively concerned himself with enhancing the artistic quality of additions to the collection during his chairmanship. His correspondence is patterned with repeated calls for the Trustees to focus on acquiring a few really good pictures a year over a handful of 'inferior articles', which he justifies on account of the relative comprehensiveness of the collection and the limited availability of exhibition space.<sup>350</sup> In 1879, for instance, he rails against the intended purchase of three portraits showing Lord Lytton, Macaulay and Thackeray at home, which he considered to be very poorly executed: 'I don't see why we are to buy such pictures mainly because the vulgar public like them – our aim sd. be rather to draw them away from their contemplation - & instruct them to like better things - even in a portrait gallery'.<sup>351</sup> Hardinge's preoccupation with this aspect of the acquisition process ensured that the selecting, researching and fielding of potential accessions to present for inspection at the next Trustees' meeting largely fell to Scharf. Indeed, following the deaths of Smith, Carpenter and Stanhope in the 1870s, there is evidence to suggest that he took over primary responsibility for this proactive approach and that the

<sup>349</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 8 Dec. 1880, NPG7/1/1/4/1/16, HAL. Scharf's development of the collection catalogue into an expanded format, is explored in Chapter 5.

<sup>350</sup> See Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 22 Feb. 1877, NPG7/1/1/4/1/13, HAL; and 13 Mar. 1892 (papers relating to the 199th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 21 Mar. 1892, uncatalogued material, HAL). In their tribute to Hardinge following his death in 1894, the Trustees credit 'his distinguished ability as a painter' as having given 'special weight to his judgment upon all matters connected with art' (see minutes of the 107<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 23 Aug. 1894, NPG 1/5, p. 126, HAL).

<sup>351</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 3 Apr. 1879, NPG7/1/1/4/1/15, HAL, original emphasis. These portraits by Edward Matthew Ward were offered to the Gallery by Thomas Agnew & Sons, who had purchased them at Christies. The Trustees voted against their acquisition 5–4, although the portrait of Thomas Babington Macaulay subsequently entered the collection in 1972 [NPG 4882]; see minutes of the 147<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 10 May 1879, NPG 1/3, p. 176, HAL. Scharf's response to the pictures is not known.

Chairman and Board members of the 1880s and 90s generally deferred to his judgement and expertise in identifying portraits of interest, and appraising the quality of a likeness. This beginning of a note from Hardinge to Scharf preceding a meeting is typical of the later period: 'What wd. be our agenda at the next meeting? Have we any pictures to inspect?'<sup>352</sup> It was in this way that Scharf could both exert his influence over the shaping of the early collection and maintain indirect control over how the Gallery's modest annual purchase grant of £750 was administered.<sup>353</sup>

### 3.3 Recognition and quiet authority

In the last two decades of Scharf's career, a number of occurrences reflected the confidence that the National Portrait Gallery's Trustees placed in Scharf's professional abilities, and their acknowledgement of his integral role within the Institution. First, was their promotion of him from Secretary to Director in 1882, which, according to J.F. Boyes of the *Art Journal*, placed him 'officially on a level with the chiefs of the older galleries'.<sup>354</sup> Although this new title did not entail an increase in salary or executive privileges, it was nonetheless intended to 'mark their appreciative sense of Mr Scharf's services to the Gallery'.<sup>355</sup> Second, was the fact of their ready acceptance of an oil portrait of Scharf by William Walter Ouless that had been commissioned by a group of his friends and supporters (a number of whom were on the Board, see below) in 1885 (fig. 37). This hung for many years in the Boardroom of the NPG's administration offices at 20 Great George Street, in recognition of his contribution to the development of the collection.<sup>356</sup> Writing to Scharf in 1892, the 15<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby - appointed Trustee in 1861 and also a subscriber to the picture - further asserts: 'I look on the N.P.G as your creation, though the idea was that of the late Lord Stanhope. Nothing in our

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<sup>352</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 9 Apr. 1876, NPG7/1/1/4/1/13, HAL. In the same sequence he admits: 'I am glad you have successfully selected our recent purchases' (Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 5 Dec. 1877, NPG7/1/1/4/1/13, HAL).

<sup>353</sup> Unlike Frederic Burton at the National Gallery, Scharf did not command executive power with regards to acquisitions (see also, Chapters 1 & 2), but was beholden to the decisions of the Board in this respect. The purchase grant equalled about £82,500 in today's money. It was modest indeed in comparison with the NG's £10,000 a year for purchases.

<sup>354</sup> Such as the British Museum and the National Gallery; see Boyes, 'The Chiefs of our National Museums', p.299.

<sup>355</sup> Boyes, 'The Chiefs of our National Museums', p.299.

<sup>356</sup> See minutes of the 178<sup>th</sup> & 179<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 24 Mar. & 10 Jun. 1886, NPG 1/4, pp. 141–7, HAL. In a letter to Hardinge transcribed here, Scharf modestly refuses to accept credit for his achievements, insisting: 'My post has been to carry out the directions and to advance the wishes of the Trustees'.

time has been a more complete success'.<sup>357</sup> Scharf was quietly proud of the tribute, ordering a batch of photographs after the portrait to send to friends, and including on the reverse of these reproductions a label replicating the testimonial inscribed on the picture's frame.<sup>358</sup> Perhaps more important was the Trustees' decision, after his death in 1895, to waive the normal Ten-Year Rule governing the admission of sitters into the collection. Instead, Scharf's likeness was almost immediately accessioned to hang with the other portraits in the Gallery and take its place amongst significant figures of British cultural life.

Third, was their effort to secure a special extension to Scharf's contract past the Civil Service's mandatory retirement age of 65 on account of his 'invaluable services' to the Institution and in particular to enable him to oversee the transfer of the collection from the Bethnal Green Museum to the new gallery building at St Martin's Place.<sup>359</sup> This new rule came into effect in January 1892, by which point Scharf was already 71 (see also, Chapter 1). The minutes of the 198<sup>th</sup> Trustees' meeting held on 11 January are largely devoted to this issue and also gather together transcripts of testimonies from seven Trustees not present, in support of the Treasury's stated exemption to the rule, which rested on the enforced retirement of an incumbent being considered 'detrimental to the Public Service'.<sup>360</sup> A letter from the artist Sir Frederic Leighton (appointed 1880) expresses the vehemence with which the absent Trustees presented their case:

The qualifications of our present Director for the post he occupies are not so much exceptional as unique. In a happy combination of knowledge, memory and experience he is entirely unrivalled. We should not be able to replace him, and his loss would be to us, and, if our Gallery is of any importance to the nation, to the nation also, little short of a calamity.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Edward Stanley to George Scharf, 23 Oct. 1891, NPG7/3/5/1/6, HAL. Lord Derby writes in thanks for a copy of the 1891 *Art Journal* article, in which Oules portrait is reproduced and discussed; see also, nt. 288.

<sup>358</sup> See, for example, George Scharf, personal diary, 1 & 23 Sep. 1889, NPG7/3/1/46, HAL. On the production and reception of this portrait see Carol Blackett-Ord, LVPC entry NPG 985; <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitExtended/mw05646/Sir-George-Scharf>, accessed 25 May 2016. In 1886 Scharf had the opportunity to view the portrait on display at the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition [no. 233]: 'Private View, Royal Academy...To the Academy & saw my own portrait in a good position in the large room. Met the President [Frederic Leighton] on the threshold' (George Scharf, personal diary, 30 Apr. 1886, NPG7/3/1/43, HAL).

<sup>359</sup> Lionel Cust, 12 Sep. 1895, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1895*, p.4, HAL. Although involved in planning the transfer of the collection to St Martin's Place, Scharf unfortunately did not live long enough to oversee the actual move in 1896 (see Chapter 4). See also, Appendix I.

<sup>360</sup> Minutes of the 198<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 11 Jan. 1892, NPG 1/5, p. 35, HAL.

<sup>361</sup> Frederic Leighton to Charles Stewart Hardinge (transcript of letter), 8 Jan. 1892; minutes of the 198<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 11 Jan. 1892, NPG 1/5, p. 35, HAL. Directly below this in the minutes, is a record of the 15<sup>th</sup>

William Ewart Gladstone (appointed 1860) similarly stresses the uniqueness of Scharf's abilities in comparison to more uniform levels of qualification and attainment generally maintained by civil service employees, insisting that the Treasury could have 'no application to cases of special and isolated knowledge such as yours, in which indeed, as far as I know you have your specialism all to yourself and no man is within measurable distance of you'.<sup>362</sup> The written response from the Treasury regretted that in fact this clause could not be applied in Scharf's case as he was upwards of 70, but suggested a special arrangement - sanctioned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer - whereby his employment could be continued on a temporary basis, during which time he would receive his pension and extra remuneration up to the amount of his former salary.<sup>363</sup>

That senior members of the government were also aware of Scharf's pivotal role within the Institution is evidenced by way of his own swift appointment to the Board following his actual retirement in March 1895, though he didn't live long enough to attend a meeting.<sup>364</sup> Andrea Geddes Poole argues that, by the end of his career, Scharf was a Director 'to whom the Treasury listened with serious attention'.<sup>365</sup> She further cites a letter in response to a direct appeal from Downing Street regarding candidates for Vice-chairman, in which Scharf 'opined freely': 'In absolute confidence, the two members of the Board most likely to be effective as Vice Chairman of the Trustees of this Gallery are Viscount Cobham & Viscount Dillon...Sir Coutts Lindsay is, to say the least, uncertain in his ways & movements. A scientific man, resident in London, would be a great boon to the Board'.<sup>366</sup> Scharf's friend the antiquary

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Earl of Derby's testimonial, which echoes these sentiments: 'Your services are necessary to the Trust; indeed I do not know what we would do without you; and the Treasury ought to be told so'.

<sup>362</sup> William Ewart Gladstone to George Scharf (transcript of postcard), 17 Jan. 1892; minutes of the 198<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 11 Jan. 1892, NPG 1/5, pp. 37–8, HAL.

<sup>363</sup> See minutes of the 199<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 21 Mar. 1892, NPG 1/5, p. 49, HAL. George Goschen was Chancellor of the Exchequer between January 1887 and August 1892.

<sup>364</sup> See minutes of the 210<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 9 May 1895, NPG 1/5, p. 168, HAL. Geddes Poole describes this act as an 'exceptional honour'; see *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p.96. Scharf was given a knighthood in February 1895, though he similarly had little time to contemplate this official recognition of his status. An entry in his diary for 29 Jan. 1895, however, indicates his excitement as he receives a letter from Lord Rosebery offering a K.C.B 'on the next vacancy & to be EXTRA till then!' (NPG7/3/1/52, HAL). He had been created a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1885.

<sup>365</sup> Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p.96.

<sup>366</sup> George Scharf to George Herbert Murray (private secretary to the Prime Minister), 10 Apr. 1894 (draft), NPG7/1/1/3/3, HAL, original emphasis; see also Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p.96.

Harold Lee-Dillon, 17<sup>th</sup> Viscount Dillon was appointed Trustee in 1894 (becoming Chairman in 1908), although it was Philip Sidney, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron De L'Isle and Dudley who was made Vice-chairman to lead the Board during Hardinge's prolonged illness at this time.<sup>367</sup> This indicates that Scharf's advice, though solicited and welcomed, was not always adhered to; Geddes Poole indeed notes that the 'scientific man, resident in London' was not secured for a number of years.<sup>368</sup> Nevertheless, Scharf continued to receive such appeals, specifically this personal request from the Prime Minister Lord Rosebery, in relation to his successor at the Gallery:

I am not able to write very much, but am anxious to obtain your opinion as to the best man for the post at the Portrait Gallery. The candidates appear to be Mr [Charles Edward] Halle, Mr [Hallam] Murray, Mr [Lionel] Cust. Your judgement (which I will treat as confidential) will be of the highest value to me. I am also anxious to obtain your consent to nominate you as a Trustee of the National Portrait Gallery, so that it may retain the inestimable benefit of your experience and guidance.<sup>369</sup>

Lionel Cust, Scharf's favoured applicant for the role, was officially appointed in May 1895. Whilst Geddes Poole maintains that this was entirely due to the former approaching Scharf 'cognizant of his influence', the decision is also likely to have hinged on wider support amongst the Trustees<sup>370</sup>

A sense of Scharf's self-assurance and underlying authority in his mature years was also manifested in other areas of his professional activity, namely his efforts to guide the Trustees in their acquisition of portraits for the collection, as discussed above. One prominent example of the 1890s, efficiently demonstrates his approach. This centred on a small portrait head by George Romney offered to the Gallery by William Agnew in 1894 (fig. 38). Provisionally identified as the poet William Cowper, Agnew purchased the head at the Christie's sale of the artist's effects on 24 and 25 June, at which he also secured Romney's unfinished self-portrait

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<sup>367</sup> See minutes of the 206<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 7 Jun. 1894, NPG 1/5, p. 113, HAL.

<sup>368</sup> See Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p.97.

<sup>369</sup> Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery to George Scharf, 14 Mar. 1895, NPG7/1/1/4/2/17, HAL. At this point Rosebery had only been in post as Prime Minister for a year.

<sup>370</sup> Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p.97; see also Sidney Colvin (Cust's superior at the British Museum) to George Scharf, 8 Mar. 1895, who reports on Lord De L'Isle's support for Cust and adds: 'so that seems all the weight of the Trustees in L.C.'s favour: and though they formally have no voice in the matter, I should think Lord R. will probably be guided by them'; NPG7/1/1/4/2/17, HAL.

for the Trustees [NPG 959].<sup>371</sup> The first picture he additionally offered for the small price of £11.11s, though the Board refused it not on account of the cost but what they perceived to be its 'deplorable condition'.<sup>372</sup> Scharf, however, registered its potential and wrote privately to Agnew expressing his frustration at the ruling:

I have great pleasure in sending you the principal part of the accompanying letter, but that which refers to the head 'possibly Cowper' vexes me extremely. I advised the Trustees to regard it as a speculative picture, unfortunately some of my Lords & Masters were positive in the extreme against it...Those with the loudest voices carried it against me.<sup>373</sup>

He then went on to ask if, as a personal favour, Agnew would let him buy it at the amount named in his letter to the Gallery, adding: 'The price was, to them, very small, but to me it would mean a great expenditure, and yet I feel so strongly on the matter that I am disposed to keep it myself'.<sup>374</sup> To this request Agnew willingly acquiesced and Scharf set about having the picture re-lined, cleaned and varnished.<sup>375</sup> He then re-presented it to the Trustees as a gift, just six months later:

As a specimen of successful restoration, I beg leave to submit to the Board of Trustees a portrait of Cowper the poet painted by Romney which the Trustees saw on a former occasion & declined to purchase on account of its worn & neglected appearance. Having a strong conviction that the picture was not irretrievably injured, I became the purchaser and entrusted the picture to Messrs. Haines...Should the Trustees concur of the success of the operation, I would feel highly gratified by their acceptance of the picture for the Gallery, as I believe both the subject and the painter to be fully deserving of a place in the National Collection.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> See Alycen Mitchell and Barbara Pezzini, 'Blown into Glittering by the Popular Breath': the Relationship between George Romney's Critical Reputation and the Art Market', *The Burlington Magazine*, 157 (July 2015), p.468. On this sale and Agnew's involvement, see also Chapter 2.

<sup>372</sup> See minutes of the 206<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 7 Jun. 1894, NPG 1/5, pp. 117–118, HAL.

<sup>373</sup> George Scharf to William Agnew, 8 Jun. 1894, RP 972, HAL.

<sup>374</sup> George Scharf to William Agnew, 8 Jun. 1894, RP 972, HAL, original emphasis.

<sup>375</sup> See Arthur B. Chamberlain, *George Romney*, London 1910, p. 177: (quoting Lawrence Romney) 'Sir George Scharf saw it and liked it, and tried to persuade the Trustees to buy it, but they would not, and so he purchased it himself from Mr Agnew, had it done up, and presented it to the National Portrait Gallery'.

<sup>376</sup> George Scharf to acting Chairman Philip Sidney (draft), undated but Dec. 1894, RP 972, HAL. Despite Scharf's conviction, the sitter has since been re-identified as the artist's friend and patron Thomas Greene.

With the reason for their original objection removed the Trustees had no recourse but to accept the portrait, which they did unanimously, thanking Scharf for his endeavour.<sup>377</sup>

Only a few other examples of Scharf venting such frustrations have been identified. Largely he was respectful of the Trustees' decisions and obedient in executing their instructions. Yet it is important to draw out these later undercurrents, not least because they counter Lara Perry's description of Scharf as an unflinchingly 'loyal – sometimes obsequious – servant of the Board'.<sup>378</sup> In contrast, his resistance to their authority is effectively illustrated in a letter to the Earl of Chichester of 1892, in which he reports the negative outcome of the inspection of portraits of Thomas Pelham-Holles, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Newcastle and Henrietta Godolphin, Duchess of Marlborough, offered for sale by the recipient:

I cannot conceal my vexation at having been commanded at a Trustee meeting held yesterday not only to decline with many thanks the Duchess Henrietta but also the Duke of Newcastle!!...The plea is insufficiency of merit as works of art...I always thought well of the Duchess Henrietta picture and was astounded at the decision which my Lords & Masters arrived at. I had gone so far as to order a frame for it.<sup>379</sup>

Furthermore, Scharf hints at his dissatisfaction with Lord De L'Isle's seemingly lacklustre approach to the Chairman's duties, in comparison with his predecessors Stanhope and Hardinge.<sup>380</sup> Reading between the lines of the following letter addressed to De L'Isle, for example, it is possible to detect Scharf's exasperation at his absence of concern with the expeditious execution of straightforward official procedures: 'It is important that these [Trustees'] minutes shall be transcribed accurately into the official book as soon as possible...I accordingly send the drafts to you in the country in the hopes that you glance at them, amend & return them to me in the ready prepared envelope herewith enclosed'.<sup>381</sup> This tension also surfaces in an unusually revealing series of letters to his friend the NPG Trustee Henry Hucks

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<sup>377</sup> See minutes of the 208<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 6 Dec. 1894, NPG 1/5, p. 149, HAL.

<sup>378</sup> Perry, *Facing Femininities*, p.82, nt.7.

<sup>379</sup> George Scharf to Walter Pelham, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Chichester, 19 Jun. 1892 (draft); papers relating to the 200th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 18 Jun. 1892, uncatalogued material, HAL, original emphasis. Scharf writes to inform Chichester of the decision directly and unofficially 'under the wing of personal friendship'. His diaries record several visits to Lord & Lady Chichester at Stanmer House in Sussex, from 1886 onwards.

<sup>380</sup> De L'Isle was appointed Chairman in 1895, following Hardinge's death, having served as Vice-chairman during the latter's extended illness.

<sup>381</sup> George Scharf to Philip Sidney, 27 Sep. 1894 (draft), NPG7/1/1/4/2/16, HAL. De L'Isle's country home was Penshurst Place in Kent, a fourteenth-century manor house that Scharf occasionally visited from South Park or Chevening.

Gibbs (appointed 1891) of 1895, which express unease with his superior's general inaction. On the subject of responding formally to an unidentified request from the Treasury, for instance, Scharf laments: 'In former days the Chairman of this Board of Trustees on receipt of such a letter would - if a meeting could not be obtained - have responded at once in the name of his colleagues'.<sup>382</sup> It is clear that in this case, Scharf keenly feels the limitations of his own ability to act independently, with the use of this humorous analogy: 'I have no initiative power & am like the Speaker, whom Chas 1<sup>st</sup> came to demand the five members, without eyes, ears or tongue of my own excepting such as my lords & masters may bestow. I wish Lord De L'Isle would write a dignified letter worthy of the occasion'.<sup>383</sup>

### 3.4 Assimilation and diplomacy

Despite these private expressions of irritation towards the behaviour of some NPG Trustees, outwardly Scharf maintained an unwavering diplomacy, carrying out their wishes without perceptible reluctance or hesitation. Indeed, he knew his place, and I maintain that it was this attitude that secured a 40-year relationship with the Board defined by Geddes Poole as a 'model of mutually respectful cooperation'.<sup>384</sup> She further maintains that such harmonious relations resulted from the fact that, due to the NPG Board's unusual make-up, Scharf did not need to rely on an instinctive understanding of the ways of the aristocracy.<sup>385</sup> Yet I contend that it was exactly his ability to tactfully conduct himself according to the social position of different Trustees - particularly the patrician element, comprising roughly fifty per cent of the Board - that ensured this dynamic. A less generous summation would be that he was able to successfully ingratiate himself across the Board's social strata. In their formal tribute to his memory following his death in 1895, the Trustees' concluding remarks demonstrate the extent of Scharf's assimilation, well beyond the confines of professional interactions:

To the record of the great loss sustained by the National Portrait Gallery by the death of Sir George Scharf, the Trustees append their own united feeling that, where the

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<sup>382</sup> George Scharf to Henry Hucks Gibbs, 14 Feb. 1895 (draft), NPG7/1/1/4/2/17, HAL.

<sup>383</sup> George Scharf to Henry Hucks Gibbs, 14 Feb. 1895 (draft), NPG7/1/1/4/2/17, HAL.

<sup>384</sup> Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p.96.

<sup>385</sup> As noted above, Geddes Poole contrasts the NPG's Board with others including the National Gallery's, which during the late nineteenth century was almost entirely composed of aristocratic trustees; see Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, pp.18–26.



public service has been deprived of a zealous and devoted servant, they have themselves lost a courteous, genial and very highly-valued friend.<sup>386</sup>

It is interesting to compare, for example, the nature of Frederic Burton's relationship with the National Gallery's Board during the same period. In comparison with Scharf's experience, his was characterized by antipathy and mistrust on both sides. This may in part have been due to Burton's ability to purchase paintings without the prior authorization of the Trustees and his habit of occasionally bypassing their involvement in acquisitions altogether. Geddes Poole further asserts that in his later years Burton became known for being 'somewhat arbitrary and dictatorial with his board of trustees', a position that could not have been more different from Scharf's.<sup>387</sup> The iciness of relations amongst the management of the National Gallery is exemplified in a fascinating sequence of correspondence between Hardinge, Scharf and NG Trustee, Sir William Gregory. These concern the National Portrait Gallery's attempted acquisition in 1891 of Holbein's portrait of Henry VIII and the Barber Surgeons.<sup>388</sup> Burton had initially received a confidential communication from a member of the Barber-Surgeons Company, who raised the possibility of selling the picture to the nation. Burton broached the issue discretely at a National Gallery Trustee meeting, although the news soon spread to the NPG (probably via Hardinge, as NG Board member) and Scharf was directed to make enquiries into the proposition. Following this Hardinge received a letter from Gregory, which he forwarded to Scharf. It concludes thus:

I think you had better say nothing to Scharf about Burton's unpleasant letter. He was evidently very sore about it, & disposed to keep it to himself...Scharf wrote to ask Burton some particulars & he received a letter which appears to have been very offensive & had hurt *our poor good Scharf*. He (Burton) supposed the next thing would be the communication to the newspapers of the proposal.<sup>389</sup>

In fact Gregory had misinterpreted the contents of the note in question and Burton, who had strongly advised discretion on the part of those he informed of the matter, had aimed his

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<sup>386</sup> Lionel Cust, 12 Sep. 1895, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1895*, p.4, HAL. For a full transcript of the Trustees' 'Tribute to the memory of Sir George Scharf, K.C.B', see Appendix I.

<sup>387</sup> Geddes Poole, *Stewards of the Nation's Art*, p.79. In fact, it was immediately following Burton's retirement in 1894 - and possibly resulting from his attitude - that the 'Rosebery Minute' was enacted, effectively shifting executive powers away from the National Gallery's Director and back towards its Board of Trustees.

<sup>388</sup> This was ultimately unsuccessful, and the painting remains with the Worshipful Company of Barbers.

<sup>389</sup> William Gregory to Charles Stewart Hardinge, n.d. but transcribed by Scharf, 23 Feb. 1891, NPG7/3/3/26/2, HAL, emphasis mine.

criticism at his own Trustees rather than Scharf himself.<sup>390</sup> Burton did not so much resent the NPG - a naturally interested candidate for the acquisition - becoming privy to the information, but instead the fact that the NG Trustees had not respected his wishes. Upon forwarding Gregory's letter to Scharf's for reference, Hardinge adds in his own note: 'I doubt your being very sore about Burton's letter, for we are all accustomed to his ways by this time'.<sup>391</sup> In his entry on Burton in *A Dictionary of Irish Artists*, Walter G. Strickland records that despite possessing a dignified bearing and social charm, he was 'yet a reticent man, and often abrupt in his manner...But to his friends his fine nature was known, and he formed many sincere and lasting friendships'.<sup>392</sup> Hardinge's correspondence with Scharf is full of accounts of Burton acting wilfully at the National Gallery or sulking in Trustees' meetings, yet these are relayed with a certain fondness and humour;<sup>393</sup> in reality the three men remained close (see Chapter 2). Indeed, Gregory's letter seems to say more about the somewhat hostile feelings of certain members of the NG's Board towards their Director, than it does about the state of Scharf's relationship with Burton. In a further communication with Hardinge, Gregory indirectly compares Burton unfavourably with Scharf: 'I am afraid I was somewhat indiscreet in mentioning to you how much [Scharf] felt Burton's letter – he has always been a true friend to us, besides being ever courteous & kind & is the last man who should be treated curtly'.<sup>394</sup>

But how are we to account for the level of Scharf's acceptance amongst his social superiors? This is all the more exceptional considering his humble background, being as he was the son of an itinerant artist and a shopkeeper, with no independent fortune and not equipped with a university education. Yet we have already seen evidence of his integration into aristocratic circles, by way of his repeated sojourns at Chevening and South Park. Admittedly, it is largely necessary to rely on Scharf's reports of his reception at both houses.

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<sup>390</sup> See Frederic William Burton to George Scharf, 12 Feb. 1891, NPG7/3/3/26/2, HAL. For a detailed analysis of Burton's relationship's with the National Gallery Trustees during his tenure, see Elena J. Greer, *Sir Frederic William Burton and the Rosebery Minute: the Directorship of the National Gallery, London, in the late Nineteenth Century* (PhD thesis, University of Nottingham/The National Gallery, 2017).

<sup>391</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 22 Feb. 1891, NPG7/3/3/26/2, HAL.

<sup>392</sup> Walter G. Strickland, 'Burton, Sir Frederick[sic], R.H.A', *A Dictionary of Irish Artists* (Dublin & London: Maunsell & Co., 1913); <http://www.libraryireland.com/irishartists/sir-frederick-william-burton.php>, accessed 3 Jun. 2016.

<sup>393</sup> See, for example, Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 10 Aug., 9 Sep. & 6 Dec. 1880, NPG7/1/1/4/1/16, HAL.

<sup>394</sup> William Gregory to Charles Stewart Hardinge, 25 Feb. 1891, NPG7/3/3/26/2, HAL. This kind of comparison occurred elsewhere. See, for example, Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 22 Aug. 1876: '...Bertie Mitford [Secretary to the First Commissioner of Works]...is very irate with Burton for hanging the pictures over the Dado [at the National Gallery]. He says you are an angel to do business with compared to Burton' (NPG7/1/1/4/1/13, HAL, original emphasis).

However, as noted above, his many references in diaries and correspondence suggest his status on these occasions as a valued guest of the family, rather than being present in any inferior capacity.<sup>395</sup> For instance, in a letter to Smith written from Chevening in 1860, Scharf openly concedes: 'There has been a constant succession of distinguished people here and to meet them on such easy terms is indeed a great privilege'.<sup>396</sup> His connections within the aristocracy extended beyond members of the NPG's Board, although these men may have facilitated initial introductions to such individuals.<sup>397</sup> Indeed, the printed list of subscribers to the Ouellet portrait of 1885 records 40 names from amongst the nobility, gentry and titled (see Appendix IV). Certainly his official position carried him some way, at least in gaining him access to aristocratic contacts and their homes. I have already touched upon Scharf's association with the Earl and Duchess of Radnor in Chapters 1 and 2, which began with his assisting the Duchess in cataloguing the pictures at Longford Castle in Wiltshire and resulted in recurrent and leisurely visits there during the 1890s (fig. 39).<sup>398</sup>

Important relationships predated this however, namely those with the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire and Lord and Lady Sackville at Knole in Kent. Again, both began with the provision of his professional services. In 1859 Scharf embarked upon a catalogue of the art collection at Blenheim, whilst his long-term interest in the pictures at Knole resulted in a number of curatorial interventions, chiefly his 1876 rearrangement of portraits in the Brown Gallery according to 'a chronological & classified series', which probably survives today.<sup>399</sup> Yet in both cases, Scharf's papers chart his gradual

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<sup>395</sup> Michie and Warhol recount that during the course of their research, a British history professor assured them it was inconceivable that the son of an 'immigrant debtor' could have been the actual friend and house guest of the titled; see Michie and Warhol, *Love among the Archives*, p.214. Yet, evidence within Scharf's papers indicates that this was indeed the case.

<sup>396</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 20 Aug. 1860, NPG20/3, HAL.

<sup>397</sup> It is also worth noting that Scharf probably began to build his network of aristocratic contacts from the early 1850s, upon his election to the Society of Antiquaries and the Athenaeum Club, and particularly through his work sourcing exhibits for the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition from private collections across the country: see Melva Croal, 'The spirit, the flesh and the milliner: Hanging the Ancient Masters at the Art Treasure's exhibition', in Leahy ed., *Art, City, Spectacle*, p.53–4.

<sup>398</sup> See, for example, George Scharf, personal diary, 6–10 Sep. 1890 and 18 Mar. 1893, NPG7/3/1/47 & 50, HAL.

<sup>399</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 18 Jul. 1876, NPG7/3/1/33, HAL. Both projects were undertaken gratuitously; Scharf only received expenses to cover his work on the Blenheim catalogue, although it is likely he was fully recompensed when cataloguing the 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby's collection at Knowsley Hall from 1865 (see NPG7/2/3&5, HAL).

transition from formal visitor to favourite and intimate family friend.<sup>400</sup> For example, he made 24 visits to Blenheim between 1860 and the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke's death in 1883, usually staying for two or three weeks at a time and often spending New Year with the family. In his annual round-up of events for 1861, for instance, Scharf notes in his diary: 'At Blenheim again, a favoured guest with friends who have already proved most kind & generously disposed towards me'.<sup>401</sup> Writing to Burton in 1885 on the question of the sale of Blenheim's *Ansidei Madonna* by Raphael (see also, Chapter 2), Scharf asserts that he was 'for so many years on terms of perfect confidence and unreserved friendship' with the late Duke.<sup>402</sup> This intimacy extended to other members of the Spencer Churchill family; the Duchess of Marlborough presented Scharf with several cartes-de-visite of herself and her children in the 1860s (see, for example, fig. 40). These he proudly displayed within his photograph albums of 'distinguished persons'.<sup>403</sup> He further received frequent invitations to her London residence throughout the year and was a guest at numerous family weddings, invariably held at St James's church, Piccadilly.<sup>404</sup> Scharf was particularly friendly with the Duke and Duchess's third son Lord Randolph Churchill - father of Winston Churchill and future statesman - to whom he would write and send packages at Eton, and with whom he would often sit up late chatting and smoking in the 'gun room' at Blenheim.<sup>405</sup> A photograph showing Randolph aged about 13 was gifted to Scharf during a three-week visit in September 1862, and is inscribed to him by the sitter on the verso (see figs. 41 & 41a).

Surely we can equate Scharf's assimilation to some extent with his genial character. He appeared to be genuinely well liked, proving an enthusiastic house guest and an entertaining addition to any weekend party. He would provide sketches of family members on demand, participate readily in amateur theatricals, and even pass on party tricks from one

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<sup>400</sup> See also, Chapter 1. Michie and Warhol write at length about Scharf's relationship with Mortimer Sackville-West, 1st Baron Sackville and his wife. They express surprise that his regular room at Knole was located in the family section of the house, rather than the guest wing (see Michie and Warhol, *Love among the Archives*, p.192).

<sup>401</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 31 Dec. 1861, NPG7/3/1/18, HAL.

<sup>402</sup> George Scharf to Frederic William Burton, 7 Jul. 1885 (draft), NPG7/1/2/1/1/4, HAL.

<sup>403</sup> See Album 155 (Ax29641–Ax29687), NPG. These cartes are inscribed by Scharf on the versos, as being gifts from the Duchess.

<sup>404</sup> For example, he reports back to Lord Stanhope after attending a ceremony here in June 1874: 'The wedding yesterday was most brilliant. Lady Anne Churchill made a charming bride...Lord Randolph introduced me to his Lady. I was greatly disappointed with her looks, and so also seem to have been many of those who had the opportunity of observing her'; George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 12 Jun. 1874, U1950/C371/1, KHL.

<sup>405</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, 31 Dec. 1871, NPG7/3/1/28, HAL.

house to another. But one could also posit that his professional standing played a crucial role in this regard. Scharf's noble hosts respected his expertise when it came to their art collections and valued his advice, which he gave freely and generously. This arguably compensated to a degree for his lowly social origins, and enabled him to interact on a somewhat equal footing in such exalted company. Paula Gillett explores the nineteenth-century redefinition of the term 'gentleman', which entailed the injection of a strong moral dimension to the meaning of the word, whereas previously an individual 'required either a liberal education or the means to live like a gentleman, to be considered one'.<sup>406</sup> Indeed Samuel Smiles, writing in 1869, positions 'character' as above all else the crowning glory of human life, 'constituting a rank in itself, and an estate in the general good-will'.<sup>407</sup> Added to this was a contemporary shift in the relations between occupation and class, as identified by Philip Elliott. He notes that 'from being a hindrance to any claims to social status, occupation has become a key indicator of social position', and argues that this change occurred in the nineteenth century. Whereas in pre-industrial society the professions were able to 'maintain a foothold in the ranks of gentlemen' only by glossing over work responsibilities and emphasising the leisured lifestyle their members could adopt, by the end of the 1800s, with the Victorian gospel of work in full swing, the reverse was true.<sup>408</sup> In this environment Scharf's professionalism was his currency. Michie and Warhol also register a change in cultural attitudes towards the professions, in part realized through the consolidation of a professional class during the period. Whilst they concede that Scharf's attainment of his official position was unusual in light of his background, they also maintain that the 'existence of a professional class made his entry into public life possible and, indeed, made his accomplishments visible'.<sup>409</sup>

Besides the obvious pleasure Scharf took in being able to participate in these aristocratic lifestyles, a mode so different to his comfortable yet modest bachelor existence in London, it is worth also considering the implications of his movements within such circles for his professional practice. I have previously noted the importance of his visits to various country house collections in aid of his wider survey of historic British portraiture. Of equal

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<sup>406</sup> Gillett, *The Victorian Painter's World*, p.23. On the moral dimension of the Victorian gentleman, see also Chapter 1.

<sup>407</sup> Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help: With Illustrations of Character, Conduct and Perseverance* (London: John Murray, 1869), p.382.

<sup>408</sup> Philip Ross Courtney Elliott, *The Sociology of the Professions* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p.32.

<sup>409</sup> Helena Michie and Robyn Warhol, *Love among the Archives*, p.21. On the emergence of a professional class in later Victorian Britain, see also Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society*.

significance were the relationships he nurtured with their owners, in terms of the level of access he was thus granted to the artworks. His standing as a trusted house guest occasioned privileges outside those assigned to the average country house visitor, who would normally be restricted to viewing pictures on a public day or by appointment when the owners were not in residence. In contrast, Scharf was largely given the run of these houses, spending long hours sketching pictures at will before joining the family for meals, and occasionally having works taken down from the walls for his particular inspection. The following entry in Scharf's diary testifies to the freedoms he enjoyed, as he records that during a five-day trip to Knole in May 1883: 'Lady Sackville entrusted to me the keys of the house, as formerly'.<sup>410</sup> It was not just the art collections that served as vital point of reference for his work but also the extensive private libraries maintained at these estates, which comprised unique resources for portraiture research. They included Lord Stanhope's library at Chevening (see above) and the great Sunderland Library at Blenheim. Scharf would spend time taking notes from various historical and biographical volumes, or making sketches after portrait engravings he encountered there. On one occasion he notes that he 'made extracts in the Library' from Blenheim's extra-illustrated edition of the Earl of Clarendon's *The history of the rebellion and civil wars in England*, which likely contained valuable portrait information not obtainable elsewhere (see fig. 42).<sup>411</sup> Alongside these physical resources, Scharf also appreciated the opportunities for networking that his prolonged trips routinely provided. Writing to William Smith in 1859, for instance, he recognizes the potential of his presence at Blenheim: 'The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough are very much interested in my notes & sketches of the pictures at Blenheim and introduce me to other persons who have & like pictures for the purpose of extending my views & information'.<sup>412</sup> As well as a personal pride in his acceptance amongst such individuals, his remarks demonstrate the fact that - even at this early stage of his career - Scharf is alert to the possibilities of how these connections could ultimately inform his professional endeavours for the Gallery.

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<sup>410</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 12 May 1883, NPG7/3/1/40, HAL.

<sup>411</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, 3 Jan. 1868, NPG7/3/1/25, HAL. Unfortunately the contents of Blenheim's Library were sold at auction in 1882, in an attempt by the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke to escape severe financial difficulties. Much of the art collection was similarly sold off by the 8<sup>th</sup> Duke, following his father's death (see Chapter 2). On Scharf and the Sunderland Clarendon, see also Lucy Peltz, *Facing the Text: Extra-Illustration, Print Culture, and Society in Britain, 1769–1840* (California: Huntington Library Press, 2017), p.348.

<sup>412</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 4 Aug. 1859, NPG20/3, HAL.

## Chapter 4

### George Scharf and the national portraits I (organization and instruction)

This chapter investigates George Scharf's approach to the organization of the collection across the National Portrait Gallery's first three locations. Curatorial expertise developed during his appointment as Art Secretary to the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857 certainly informed his subsequent professional practice at the Gallery, and I consider the extent to which he was able to realize his ambitions amid the changing exhibition spaces of the early Institution. Lack of space was indeed a crucial issue; the burgeoning collection initially precluded any attempt at a rational hanging scheme, and I argue that it was not until the NPG moved to comparatively more spacious apartments at South Kensington (1870–85), that Scharf was able to think significantly about the arrangement of the collected portraits and the nature of visitor experience. For example, this period saw experiments in chronological display and the creation of clear pathways through the Gallery to generate a sense of historical progression. I consider both the motivation behind and the success of this exhibitionary regime. In addition, I endeavour to position specific curatorial decisions - and Scharf himself - in relation to wider contemporary discourse surrounding the educational function of public art collections, the audiences these institutions were intended to address and the didactic potential of museum space.

#### 4.1 Beginnings at Westminster

Upon the establishment of the National Portrait Gallery in December 1856 the Government provided rooms on the first and second floor of a domestic residence at 29 Great George Street, Westminster, to house the fledgling collection.<sup>413</sup> By the time it opened to the public on 15 January 1859, George Scharf was installed in two rooms at the top of the building as live-in custodian for the portraits, leaving three principal display spaces: the Front and Back rooms on the first floor and the Boardroom, which doubled as a public area. At this point there were 57 portraits in the collection, although a steady rate of acquisition ensured that the limited wall space became an increasing and constant concern. Scharf's sketches detailing the arrangement of the pictures upon the walls document a necessarily cluttered hang, with

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<sup>413</sup> See minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 9 Feb. 1857, NPG 1/1, p.4, HAL. The rooms were leased from James Simpson, who ran his business from the ground-floor rooms.

paintings crammed in from floor to ceiling roughly according to size.<sup>414</sup> Early correspondence between the Secretary and Lord Stanhope reveals the active interest taken by the first Chairman in the positioning of works. On one occasion he remarks: 'I think upon the whole that the Burns [NPG 46] had best be placed directly under the Mackintosh [NPG 45]— raising the Mackintosh a little higher', querying on another: 'How would the Howe [NPG 75] look if suspended on one side between the doors of the Front Room leading from the Board Room?'.<sup>415</sup> In general however, Scharf is left to his own devices; this lively description of 1865 conjures an image of the patchwork effect of the portraits, as they spill out down the stairs:

The new pictures are already hung upon the walls. The Campbell is placed by the side of Mackintosh (two good Lawrences together & near Keats, Thomson and Coleridge) and the Whitfield preaching is out on the ground under Sir Christopher Wren. Queen Mary...hangs on the staircase next to the Cardinal York, between him & John Hunter, resting on the corner of the dado. Father Mathew for the present stands on the ground under the Wilkie & has good light on him...(fig. 43)<sup>416</sup>

An examination of the drawings describing the interiors suggests that in the absence of the capacity to systematically arrange or classify the portraits, Scharf echoes to some extent the Picturesque style of hang. Predominant in private picture collections throughout the nineteenth century, this approach endeavoured to create a sense of visual coherence through the symmetrical grouping of works of various sizes.<sup>417</sup> Scharf's sketch of the east wall of the Boardroom for example, dated September 1868, reveals his evident attempt at symmetry where possible, with larger frames arranged around a central double row of similarly-sized portraits, itself flanked to decorative effect by the busts of John Hampden [NPG 146] and Oliver Cromwell [NPG 132] on tall pedestals (see fig. 44).<sup>418</sup> Lara Perry has written convincingly

<sup>414</sup> For Scharf's sketches showing the arrangement of portraits at Great George Street, 1863–8, see NPG66/1/2/1, HAL. See also SSB 84, NPG7/3/4/2/95, pp.58–74, HAL.

<sup>415</sup> Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 26 Jun. 1858 and 1 Jul. 1859, NPG7/1/1/4/1/3&4, HAL. For more on Stanhope's close interest in the early collection, see Chapter 3.

<sup>416</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 20 Jun. 1865, NPG20/3, HAL.

<sup>417</sup> For a discussion of nineteenth-century hanging practices see Giles Waterfield, *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain, 1790–1990* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1991), pp.49–65. The situation compares closely with the National Gallery at its first home in a Pall Mall town house, where pictures were hung densely without reference to chronology or geography, much in the tradition of private art collections; see Susanna Avery-Quash and Alan Crookham, 'Art Beyond the Nation: A European Vision for the National Gallery', in Meyer and Savoy eds., *The Museum Is Open*, p.166; and Charlotte Klonk, *Spaces of experience: art gallery interiors from 1800–2000* (New Haven & London: YUP, 2009), p.24.

<sup>418</sup> See minutes of the 65th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 7 Jun. 1864: 'The Secretary was authorized to procure Scagliola pedestals [for the busts] in lieu of the plaster ones and to have a turning-plate made for the bust of Cromwell'; NPG 1/1, p.210, HAL.



about early visitors to the Gallery, proposing that the audience for the collection varied significantly across its three temporary homes and arguing that the changes in geographical location held implications for its exhibiting practice, as well as inspiring wider debate concerning the NPG's intended 'public'.<sup>419</sup> At this first site, a short walk from Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament, the Gallery's visitors largely comprised members of the gentry, peers and their relations.<sup>420</sup> Although Scharf and the Trustees made real efforts to attract a working class audience - conducting special Easter opening over the three-day holiday weekend - the initial requirement to obtain entry tickets from West End print dealers (Henry Graves & Co., P. & D. Colnaghi and John Smith) on public days throughout the year, is likely to have deterred all but the most determined visitors in this category.<sup>421</sup> Instead, the NPG was largely populated by the polite and leisured class, or 'habitués of Westminster', at ease amongst an intimate arrangement of pictures in a residential space 'familiar from their extra-parliamentary social lives, in which visiting [town and country] houses and looking at their portrait collections was an accepted form of tourism as well as social intercourse'.<sup>422</sup> Perry additionally notes that the public rooms at Great George Street retained a homely atmosphere with the inclusion amongst the portraits of some small furnishings. One of Scharf's drawings of the interior features a loaded coal scuttle positioned on a hearth, illustrating the necessity of functioning fire places in the display areas.<sup>423</sup> For working class visitors who did venture to the Gallery, this environment inspired quiet and orderly conduct. Reporting on attendance for Easter Monday 1862, Scharf is impressed by the public's subdued behaviour: 'They spoke only in a whisper and seemed to have the feeling of entering a drawing room rather than a picture gallery'.<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> See Perry, 'The National Portrait Gallery and its constituencies, 1858–96', pp.128–134.

<sup>420</sup> In addition, working artists and art students made up an important segment of the NPG's first audience, members of the profession continuing to use the Gallery for research and reference purposes, throughout Scharf's career (see also, Chapter 1).

<sup>421</sup> The free entry-ticket system was discontinued in 1860, yet the opening of the Gallery to the public on Wednesdays and Saturdays only, continued to limit working class attendance during the early years of operation. Private visitors were admitted at the Trustees' and Secretary's discretion, on the remaining days of the working week.

<sup>422</sup> Perry, 'The National Portrait Gallery and its constituencies, 1858–96', pp.147–8. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill also argues that during the first 10 years of the NPG's existence, the majority of visitors outside of the Easter weekends came from the gentry: see Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p. 47.

<sup>423</sup> See Perry, *Facing Femininities*, p.43; and see fig. 46.

<sup>424</sup> George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 21 Apr. 1862, KHLC (U1590/0186/6), as quoted by Elizabeth Coutts in Coutts, *Between History and Art*, p.52.

It is important, however, not to over-emphasize the deliberateness of Scharf's curatorial intervention to this effect; a severe shortage of space remained the central determining factor of the hang at Great George Street. In 1864 he gave notice to the Office of Works that special screens would be required to accommodate further accessions. A sketch dated 1868 shows these placed at right angles to the windows in the Front Room, to maximise the light (fig. 45).<sup>425</sup> Limitations of space and light in a building not specifically designed as a public picture gallery continued to trouble Scharf. An interesting rough diagram amongst his papers describes a 'Plan for zig zag screens', and indicates a concertina of display screens projecting from the wall, opposite the line of windows facing the street.<sup>426</sup> Despite such planned and realized innovations, the situation at Westminster became critical by the end of the 1860s. In his Secretary's report for 1868, Scharf insists that

[e]very available space, even on the staircase and landings, has been utilized by the construction of framework and screens for the display of the larger pictures; and nothing now remains for the accommodation of future acquisitions but the dark and very limited wall-space of the hall, on the ground floor, immediately connected with the street door (figs. 46 & 46a).<sup>427</sup>

## 4.2 The chronological hang

In 1869 the NPG Trustees were obliged to accept the government's only offer of alternative exhibition space for the collection at South Kensington, to which it re-located at the end of the year after an unsuccessful search for larger premises in a preferred central position. A portion of the southern arcade of the Royal Horticultural Society gardens, owned by the Department of Science and Art, had been presented for use by the Gallery as early as 1864 (fig. 47).<sup>428</sup> Richard Redgrave, artist and administrator for the department, sent Scharf a plan of the proposed upper and lower long galleries, divided into a series of bays by means of screens

<sup>425</sup> See George Scharf, to Philip Stanhope (draft response outlining the necessity for the screens), 6 Apr. 1864, NPG7/1/1/4/1/8, HAL.

<sup>426</sup> George Scharf (memo), 5 Dec. 1866, NPG7/1/1/3/1, HAL. There is no evidence to suggest that this design was carried out and this is the only known reference to Scharf's scheme.

<sup>427</sup> George Scharf, 30 Apr. 1868, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1868*, p.3, HAL. See also Taylor, *Art for the Nation*, p.95.

<sup>428</sup> Interestingly, despite the South Kensington Museum's clear mandate to provide access and instruction for craftsmen and members of the working class, Scharf at this date remained anxious that the move away from the centre of London would 'be very much against the convenience of London residents and especially of that class of working artists, students and the humbler classes, with whom the NPG has hitherto found particular interest'; George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 5 Jul. 1864, transcribed in minutes of the 67th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 14 Jul. 1864, NPG 1/1, p.215, HAL.

for hanging pictures placed at right angles to the arched Italianate windows.<sup>429</sup> Originally designed as refreshment rooms for the 1862 International Exhibition, these spaces were modified to house the three National Portraits Exhibitions organized by officers of the South Kensington Museum between 1866 and 1868, to which the National Portrait Gallery loaned a number of works.<sup>430</sup> By the start of 1870, the space offered was restricted to just the upper gallery of the east wing, with use of some additional rooms to serve as Gallery offices and a Boardroom. Despite this, the change was significant. The continuous sequence of display areas immediately facilitated a logical re-organization of the collection in chronological order, fundamental to generating a narrative of the national past through portraits of its central protagonists.<sup>431</sup>

Whilst the National Gallery had successfully resisted a move west, proposed by the government in the early 1850s, Perry argues that the National Portrait Gallery's inducement to finally take part in the 'great exhibitionary enterprise' of South Kensington seems linked to 'the different social functions of the two national galleries, and the two different audiences they were meant to address'.<sup>432</sup> Indeed, the potential of the NPG to communicate the principal lessons of British history to an increasingly enfranchised public was clear from its foundation, and chimed distinctly with the South Kensington Museum's mission to engage and instruct the middle and working classes.<sup>433</sup> Yet I propose that in reality the move was practically, not

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<sup>429</sup> See minutes of the 67th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 14 Jul. 1864, NPG 1/1, pp.214–17, HAL. Redgrave suggested that although the side-lighting would prevent the display of paintings on the back wall, due to 'a glitter on the pictures', this space 'would be very suitable for busts'. In fact, photographs from 1885 show that every available piece of wall space was required for hanging paintings (see NPG22/2/1, HAL). Screens originally extended from the back wall, although during the NPG's residence these were made to rest against the window-side and extend up to the ceiling, forming separate bays and leaving a passageway along the side wall of the gallery (see Anon., 'The National Portrait Gallery', *The Times*, 9 Jun. 1879, p.6). On Redgrave's other designs for displaying pictures at the SKM and at Hampton Court, as Surveyor of The Queen's Pictures, see Brett Dolman, 'Curating the Royal Collection at Hampton Court Palace in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Collections* 29, no. 2 (Jul. 1, 2017), pp. 271–90.

<sup>430</sup> On the National Portraits Exhibitions, see also Chapters 1 & 2.

<sup>431</sup> This rearrangement was comprehensive with paintings, miniatures and medals, displayed together on the walls; see George Scharf, sketch of the east side of the third screen in the Long Gallery, South Kensington, 14 Sep. 1871, NPG66/2/2/3, HAL. Busts were initially positioned on specially constructed shelves on the south wall of the gallery (see nt. 429), but these were integrated into the chronological display, probably following the re-hang of 1879.

<sup>432</sup> Perry, 'The National Portrait Gallery and its constituencies, 1858–96', pp.149. See also Perry, *History's Beauties*, p.150. The NPG's move to South Kensington followed the 1867 Reform Act and coincided with an increasing awareness, on behalf of the government, of the need to educate an expanded (male) electorate; see Simon Heffer, *High Minds: The Victorians and the Birth of Modern Britain* (London: Random House, 2013), pp.412–13; and Minihan, *The Nationalization of Culture*, p.30. On the importance attached to the teaching of British history see Strong, *Painting the Past*, pp.41–7.

<sup>433</sup> On the application of the museum's collection to this end, see Anthony Burton, 'The Uses of the South Kensington Art Collections', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 14, no. 1 (May 1, 2002): pp. 79–95.

idealistically, conceived in terms of space and availability.<sup>434</sup> A crucial factor in the relocation was that, although falling under the auspices of the Science and Art Department, the Gallery did not sit within the remit of the South Kensington Museum, remaining significantly lodged on the opposite side of Exhibition Road.<sup>435</sup> While the NPG's public days were increased to fit with those of the Museum, the hours of opening themselves were not extended, Scharf and the Trustees remaining persistently adverse to the use of gas as a means of lighting public galleries due to the perceived fire hazard and negative effect upon the pictures.<sup>436</sup> Regardless, the number of visitors more than doubled in the first year of residence, Scharf himself humorously noting the general tenor of the NPG's new audience when writing to William Smith: 'A good remark was made by a young fellow to a girl in the Gallery yesterday, when we were perhaps at our fullest, "There now, the Royal Academy's crowded just like this; only they're all swells"!'.<sup>437</sup> But in declining to acquiesce to evening openings, a central facet of Henry Cole's drive towards universal accessibility, the Gallery essentially distanced itself from the SKM's educational programme.<sup>438</sup> A sense of 'them' and 'us' persisted throughout the NPG's occupation of these premises (see Chapter 2), Scharf perpetuating this notion in a letter to Trustee Alexander Beresford Hope when describing the occasional use of the adjoining rooms by the Museum authorities:

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<sup>434</sup> The Trustees had literally exhausted all other options. Yet they considered the move to be temporary, expressing their expectation that the Gallery would as a permanent arrangement, 'form part of the new buildings to be erected in Trafalgar Square'; George Scharf, 6 May 1870, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1870*, p.3, HAL.

<sup>435</sup> In 1864, after visiting the proposed apartments at South Kensington, Scharf stresses one benefit of the scheme: 'the clear and most desirable independence attaching to these premises, in being favourable to a distinct management, guided as this gallery is by leading principles differing from those which regulate all other art-collections, would be a great point of recommendation. The separate entrance from Exhibition Road...would be a very great advantage; minutes of the 67th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 14 Jul. 1864, NPG 1/1, p.215, HAL.

<sup>436</sup> In this regard they were in agreement with the British Museum and the National Gallery; the latter were compelled to adhere to South Kensington regulations when the British School pictures were displayed there a decade earlier, although they resisted pressure for evening opening at Trafalgar Square until the twentieth century; see Waterfield, *The People's Galleries*, p.136; and Geoffrey N. Swinney, 'The Evil of Vitiating and Heating the Air: Artificial Lighting and Public Access to the National Gallery, London', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 15, no. 1 (May 1, 2003), pp. 83–112. Interestingly, when a number of newly conserved National Gallery loans arrived at the NPG in 1883, Scharf reported: 'The pictures had all suffered severely from exposure to smoke gas and heat during exhibition previously at the South Kensington Museum'; minutes of the 168th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 20 Nov. 1883, NPG 1/4, p.57, HAL.

<sup>437</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 18 Apr. 1876, NPG20/3, HAL. It must be noted, however, that this remark was recorded over the course of the Easter weekend holiday, when the proportion of working class visitors would have been higher than during other times in the year. Scharf was obviously taken with this remark, also recording it in his Secretary's journal on 17 April (see NPG7/1/1/1/4, HAL).

<sup>438</sup> The opening hours of the NPG at South Kensington were from 10am to 4 or 5pm, depending upon the time of year, whereas the SKM was open until 10pm on public days: see NPG77/8, HAL.

As if in mockery of *our* Gallery, the Educational Department have placed in juxtaposition with our outlying portraits, some dozen or twenty school-room clocks with vacant faces; that is; none of them go, and each one stands at a different hour from the rest. These clocks are of all sorts and sizes; so that the physiognomist might by mistake exercise his ingenuity upon them first.<sup>439</sup>

In Chapter 2 I suggest that the administrators of the National Portrait Gallery consciously aligned themselves with those of the National Gallery, an institution that remained a first point of contact for the Secretary when seeking advice in all areas of professional activity. Despite clear differences in acquisition policy and intellectual rationale (articulating national biography, as opposed to the evolution of western art), I propose that Scharf positioned his curatorial endeavours at the NPG alongside the wider implementation of an historicizing and didactic style of display, advocated by the National Gallery and other national art museums during the second half of the nineteenth century. This policy centred on the drive towards both general education and moral improvement, through the structured and logical arrangement of art works.<sup>440</sup> Thus, whilst Perry suggests that the opportunity to address a broader audience at South Kensington prompted a change to the NPG's exhibition strategy, I argue that it was only the spatial inadequacies of Great George Street that prevented Scharf from effecting such classification from the outset. Although speaking for the Board of Trustees in his official report of the move, one can sense his own satisfaction with the rearrangement:

Hence they have been enabled to effect what they *have long desired*, a chronological arrangement of the portraits. Hence, also, they have had the pleasure of placing in favourable aspect not a few of those portraits hitherto of necessity crowded closely together...several persons who were already well acquainted with the old apartments, and who came to inspect the new, [remarked] that they felt as though they had never see those pictures before.<sup>441</sup>

#### 4.3 Early influences: Manchester and Germany

<sup>439</sup> Excerpt of letter from George Scharf to Alexander Beresford Hope, 26 Jan. 1878, NPG7/1/1/3/1/8, HAL, emphasis mine. Scharf and Beresford Hope were also good friends, which perhaps accounts for the exasperated tone of this letter to a member of the NPG's Board.

<sup>440</sup> On nineteenth-century museological reform, see Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain*, pp.135–43. Regional art galleries developed along different lines, largely collecting contemporary British art with readable narratives that could impart simple moral lessons and provide a metaphorical 'window to nature' in an industrialized society; see Amy Woodson-Boulton, *Transformative Beauty: Art Museums in Industrial Britain* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2012).

<sup>441</sup> George Scharf, 6 May 1870, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1870*, p.3, HAL, emphasis mine.

Scharf's impulse towards systematic display was undoubtedly informed by his role as Art Secretary and Director of the Ancient Masters Gallery for the 1857 Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, which directly preceded his appointment at the National Portrait Gallery.<sup>442</sup> This loan exhibition was unprecedented in its scale and scholarly ambition, presenting a comprehensive survey of western art and gathering together for the first time, pictures from private (and some public) collections across the country. Collected works in the purpose-built exhibition hall at Old Trafford included Old Masters, pictures by 'Modern British Masters', a 'British Portrait Gallery', engravings, watercolours, and examples of decorative art.<sup>443</sup> On a practical level, skills developed at Manchester directly benefitted Scharf's later work for the NPG. Elizabeth Pergam and Melva Croal have both examined his meticulous approach to arranging 1,173 carefully selected paintings by 'Ancient Masters' in three connected saloons, noting his request to the architect of the building for elevations of the internal walls.<sup>444</sup> Before physically embarking upon the task, Scharf virtually conceived a scheme for the hang, populating a scale model of the galleries with corresponding reductions of the pictures.<sup>445</sup> On the eve of the NPG's move to South Kensington from Westminster, he resolved to adopt the same course. Instructed by the Trustees to compile a list dictating the order in which the pictures were to be hung at the new site, Scharf chose to sort sitters by death date according to Edmund Lodge's volume of portrait heads and other engraved biographical collections.<sup>446</sup> He then worked under his own initiative, affixing scaled-down

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<sup>442</sup> In fact the two posts initially overlapped. Although appointed to the NPG in February 1857, Scharf was officially employed at Manchester from September 1856 until the exhibition opened on 5 May. William Hookham Carpenter Jnr. acted as Secretary in his absence. Confusingly, William Hookham Carpenter Snr. had served as NPG Secretary prior to Scharf's appointment; see minutes of the 4th meeting of the Board of Trustees, 9 Mar. 1857, NPG 1/1, p.16, HAL.

<sup>443</sup> For a comprehensive examination of the exhibition and its intellectual rationale see Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*; and Helen Rees Leahy, 'Introduction: the 1857 Manchester Exhibition revisited', in Helen Rees Leahy ed., *Art, City, Spectacle: The 1857 Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition Revisited* (Manchester: The John Rylands University Library, 2009), pp.7–19.

<sup>444</sup> George Scharf to Edward Salomons, 9 Jan. 1857, as cited in Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, p.62. Croal has pinpointed squared pieces of graph paper representing pictures, interleaved in his volume of Manchester press cuttings, as evidence of his construction of scaled diagrams for this purpose; see Croal, 'The spirit, the flesh and the milliner', p.54; and NPG7/2/2/3, HAL.

<sup>445</sup> See George Scharf, *A Handbook to the paintings by ancient masters in the Art Treasures Exhibition: being a reprint of critical notices originally published in 'The Manchester Guardian'* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1857), p.84.

<sup>446</sup> See George Scharf, 'Chronological arrangement of portraits, preparing for hanging pictures in the new Gallery at South Kensington', 1870, NPG66/2/2/1, HAL; and Edmund Lodge, *Portraits of Illustrious personages of Great Britain*, 1814–34 edn.

sketches of the portraits to squared paper, ruled to the dimensions of the rooms.<sup>447</sup> The level of detail employed in these drawings featuring each picture within its frame, reveals both his dedication to the task and also his interest in the visual effect of their positioning upon the wall.<sup>448</sup> One of Scharf's sketches for the arrangement on the first screen in the long gallery, for example, shows a grouping of Tudor and Elizabethan portraits, including Katherine of Aragon [NPG 163] and Sir Walter Raleigh [NPG 7] (see fig. 48). Each is numbered in red crayon according to its location on the list, although strict chronology seems to have been sacrificed to ensure a harmonious arrangement of variously-sized frames. A subsequent drawing of the actual hang as recorded soon after the move in 1871 (fig. 49), corresponds closely to this initial idea, yet in reality a few extra pictures have been squeezed into the space resulting in a denser and less balanced effect.<sup>449</sup>

Manchester was to prove a formative experience beyond the technicalities of picture arranging, consolidating Scharf's ideas on the potential of effective display and the shaping of visitor experience, whilst establishing his reputation amongst leading art historians and gallery practitioners. Giles Waterfield observes that the Art Treasures exhibition differed from other temporary exhibitions proliferating during the Victorian period in its 'organization of the loans to create a narrative about the history of art, and the provision of didactic and popular catalogues instructing the visitor in the subject. In effect, the organizers aimed to create a three-dimensional text-book'.<sup>450</sup> Central to this was Scharf's innovative hanging technique, through which he inserted himself into mid-century debates surrounding best practice for displaying art in the public sphere. The concept of the chronological hang - the situating of specimens of art from all periods within an historical framework - was already current, pioneered by German scholars and museum professionals. When advising the 1853 government Select Committee established to consider the future of the National Gallery, Gustav Waagen, art historian and Director of the Picture Galleries at the Royal Museum in

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<sup>447</sup> The inscription on Scharf's original envelope for his preparatory drawings of the South Kensington hang confirms the connection: 'The same course I had adopted when hanging the galleries of the great Exhibition at Manchester in 1857'; NPG66/2/2/3, HAL.

<sup>448</sup> In this respect Scharf was better placed than at Manchester, where he relied on inconsistent information sent by the owners of the pictures, to complete the task. Uncertain dimensions and the conflicting effects of colours in that instance 'frustrated his designs to a great extent'; George Scharf, *A Handbook to the paintings by ancient masters in the Art Treasures Exhibition*, p.84.

<sup>449</sup> For further consideration of Scharf's hang at South Kensington, as reflected in this sketch, see also Chapter 5.

<sup>450</sup> Giles Waterfield, 'A Culture of Exhibitions: The Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition in context', in Leahy ed., *Art, City, Spectacle*, p.23.

Berlin, further advocated the arrangement of pictures chronologically within individual or national schools.<sup>451</sup> At the forefront of a renewed scholarly interest in early Italian and Netherlandish painting in Britain, Sir Charles Eastlake oversaw the introduction of a more rigorous approach to display and collecting at the Gallery in the aftermath of these deliberations. Moving away from the tendency to acquire just the choicest works by masters of an established canon, the compilation of examples to fit into a representative scheme was instead prioritized.<sup>452</sup> Christopher Whitehead suggests that this new emphasis coincided with a period of conceptual architectural activity focusing on the National Gallery, which resulted in 'new understandings of gallery display as a medium capable of structuring art historical narratives'.<sup>453</sup> Scharf similarly experimented with his arrangement of pictures across the long and narrow sequence of exhibition rooms at Manchester, exploiting the educational possibilities of the space. In an extensive paper given to the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire in April 1858, he explains his objective:

I desired not only to arrange them in chronological order, but to mark as far as possible the contemporaneous existence of opposite schools. The long southern wall as far as the middle of saloon C....was therefore devoted *exclusively* to Italian art; and on the opposite wall were ranged the paintings of the *foreign* nations to correspond as nearly as possible, in point of time, with the dates of the Italian ones facing them. Thus the German, Flemish and French Schools held their due succession.<sup>454</sup>

Waterfield notes that this illustration of the parallel development of two strands of European art allowed visitors and scholars to directly 'contrast schools and artists that had never before been brought together in such strength'.<sup>455</sup> In placing the early German, Flemish,

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<sup>451</sup> See Gustav Friedrich Waagen, 'Thoughts on the New Building to be Erected for the new National Gallery of England, and on the Arrangement, Preservation and Enlargement of the Collection', *The Art Journal*, 1853, pp.102–3. This rational scheme was not limited to art galleries. At mid-century the British Museum was similarly arranging its collection of antiquities to express the evolution of art and civilization: see Ian Jenkins, *Archaeologists & Aesthetes: In the Sculpture Galleries of the British Museum 1800–1939* (London: BMP, 1992), pp. 56–74.

<sup>452</sup> See Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain*, pp.135–43. For detailed analysis of Waagen's influence in Britain and Germany see Giles Waterfield and Florian Illies, 'Waagen in England', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, 37 (Jan 1., 1995), 47–59; and Carmen Stonge, 'Making Private Collections Public: Gustav Friedrich Waagen and the Royal Museum in Berlin', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 10, no. 1 (Jan. 1, 1998), 61–74.

<sup>453</sup> Christopher Whitehead, 'Architectures of Display at the National Gallery: The Barry Rooms as Art Historiography and the Problems of Reconstructing Historical Gallery Space', *Journal of the History of Collections* 17, no. 2 (Dec. 1, 2005), p.189.

<sup>454</sup> George Scharf, 'On the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Vol. 10, 1857–58, p.279, original emphasis. Croal notes Scharf's use of copies where he did not have original paintings to complete the chronological sequence, an approach certainly not applicable to the NPG's collecting policy: see Croal, 'The spirit, the flesh and the milliner', p.58.

<sup>455</sup> Waterfield, *The People's Galleries*, p.92.



French, Spanish and Dutch pictures across from the Italian, Scharf encouraged the comparative analysis of differing styles and their corresponding chronological development, in situ. David Cannadine somewhat ungenerously describes Scharf prior to the NPG as 'something of an odd-job man, working on the fringes of the artistic establishment', and in so doing he seriously underestimates the importance of his contribution at Manchester.<sup>456</sup> Conversely, Francis Haskell maintains that the attention Scharf drew here 'to hitherto insufficiently appreciated paintings of the fifteenth century played a major role in shifting public taste. And for the specialists his arrangement of the pictures was almost as significant'.<sup>457</sup> In Scharf's rejection of Waagen's recommendation that Italian and German-Flemish works ought to be exhibited separately, Pergam identifies his considerable realignment of the latter's 'conception of a museum arrangement'.<sup>458</sup> In consequence, Scharf situated himself within the broader tradition of art historical scholarship predicated on German principles, but also in relation to a new generation of practitioners who would develop these ideas further (see also, Chapter 1). Amongst the substantial critical response to his novel hang, Waagen himself acknowledged the effect of each artwork appearing 'as a link in a great chain, which receives an influence from the one preceding it, and imparts an influence to the one following'.<sup>459</sup> This rationale could be easily adapted and applied to the straightforward educational aims of the National Portrait Gallery, which sought to impart to its visitors 'a sense of the trajectory of the historical development of which they themselves were a part'.<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> David Cannadine, *National Portrait Gallery: A Brief History* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2007), p.35. Whilst Manchester secured his critical reputation, Scharf's previous curatorial role at the Sydenham Crystal Palace (1854) and career lecturing on art during the 1850s, helped to establish his position within the scholarly field.

<sup>457</sup> Francis Haskell, *The Ephemeral Museum: Old Master Paintings and the Rise of the Art Exhibition* (New Haven: YUP, 2000), p.85.

<sup>458</sup> See Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, p.64; and Waagen, 'Thoughts on the New Building to be Erected for the new National Gallery of England', p.103.

<sup>459</sup> Gustav Waagen 'On the Exhibition of Art-Treasures at Manchester', *The Art Journal*, Aug. 1857, p.234, as quoted in Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, p.62. Scharf's decision to hang the Italian and the German-Flemish works together is not commented upon. Waagen's *Treasures of Art in Great Britain* (1854–7) was the inspiration for the 1857 exhibition, for which he also acted as consultant. Scharf and Waagen were acquainted before this date however, Waagen having written a testimonial in support of Scharf's application for Secretaryship of the National Gallery in 1854. In his 1858 paper, Scharf acknowledges his debt to Waagen whilst respectfully asserting the limit of the elder's contribution with regards the sourcing of art works: 'Various offers of contribution, however, soon revealed that, notwithstanding the activity of Dr. Waagen during his repeated visits, he had by no means exhausted all the choicest works contained within these shores, and the publication of a forth or supplemental volume by him, subsequent to the Manchester Exhibition, affords the best confirmation of this statement'; George Scharf, 'On the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857', p.312.

<sup>460</sup> Lara Perry, *History's Beauties*, pp.126–7. Like the National Gallery, the NPG sought to educate and morally uplift, the former through the appreciation of art in its historical context, the latter via the collected lives of the past as inspiration for the viewers of the present; see Barlow, 'The Imagined Hero as Incarnate Sign', p.524.

Although in the employment of the Gallery by May 1857, Scharf was granted a leave of absence after the opening of the exhibition to avail himself 'of the wonderful amount of materials now collected at Manchester and profiting as far as possible by this rare opportunity of gathering notes and information for the future service of the National Portrait Gallery'.<sup>461</sup> A sketchbook from this date reveals his attempt to make a visual record of aspects of the display. His drawings of the walls of the Old Masters Gallery are rapidly sketched, a simple aide-mémoire for the hang. Scharf takes considerable interest however, in the content and layout of the Portrait Gallery organized by Peter Cunningham, an antiquary and Treasury clerk.<sup>462</sup> Portraits were arranged on the walls of the exhibition building's central hall, which was flanked by the Ancient Masters and Modern British Galleries. Scharf's series of detailed sketches describe the chronological progression of pictures displayed in this space (see fig. 50), terminating with Franz Winterhalter's paintings of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort over the dais in the central transept.<sup>463</sup> To the same end, Scharf made further drawings of exhibited portraits alongside detailed written notes in his version of the official catalogue for the 'British Portrait Gallery'.<sup>464</sup> Cunningham had intended his arrangement to be considered as a prototype for the nascent national collection, and his efforts made a lasting impression on the future NPG Director (see also, Chapter 5). As late as 1893 Scharf commends his work at Manchester as having been 'the most important of historical portrait collections hitherto formed in this country'.<sup>465</sup> Upon entering the exhibition building, the public was presented with the history of the nation and its artists. Unfortunately, as Victoria Whitfield observes, the historical progression began at the opposite end from the grand entrance: 'Unless visitors were aware of this and were obliging enough to walk the length of the hall before beginning to

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<sup>461</sup> Transcript of letter from George Scharf to the Trustees, 11 May 1857, minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 11 May 1857 (NPG 1/1, p.30, HAL).

<sup>462</sup> The son of Allan Cunningham, the Scottish poet and songwriter, Peter Cunningham (1816–69) was also an author and literary critic, and contributed articles on portraiture to publications including the *Art Journal* (1864). He also sold the portrait of Samuel Pepys by John Hayls to the Trustees, in 1866 [NPG 211].

<sup>463</sup> See Scharf sketchbook 49, 1857, pp.6–26 (NPG7/3/4/2/59, HAL); and for further reference to Scharf's sketches of the Manchester exhibition hang, see Philip Cottrell, 'Art Treasures of the United Kingdom and the United States: The George Scharf Papers', *The Art Bulletin*, 94, no. 4 (Dec. 2012): 618–40.

<sup>464</sup> Peter Cunningham, 'British Portrait Gallery', *Catalogue of the Art Treasures of the United Kingdom* (1857, London: Bradbury & Evans), SL, HAL. It is clear that this volume remained a useful resource, which Scharf returned to and supplemented.

<sup>465</sup> George Scharf, draft notes, 1893, NPG8/2/1, HAL. He also praises here Cunningham's accompanying catalogue: 'Within the limits of a general Catalogue it was not possible to entre upon descriptions; a few distinctive points were noted and Mr Cunningham by reference to anecdotes & appealing to the ready knowledge of the students conveyed a vast deal of information...Whatever he did note was distinctive and telling'.

view the portraits, there was an immediate disruption of the intended chronological narrative'.<sup>466</sup>

This shortfall would not have been missed by Scharf. In 1879, when re-hanging the collection after obtaining additional rooms on the ground floor of the South Kensington arcades and the adjacent 'high room' to the west, he devised a scheme to direct the movement of people through the galleries. His large annotated drawing of the entrance at the eastern end of the building off Exhibition Road, confirms that the visitor was immediately directed upstairs to the commencement of the series, by means of a notice-board fixed to the wall with an arrow pointing the way (fig. 51). In the vestibule at the top of the staircase were displayed the electrotype effigies of early English kings and queens, under a sign reading 'Portraits belonging to the period of the Plantagenets ending A.D 1485'.<sup>467</sup> The public were thereafter guided similarly through the galleries by means of placards, with portraits gathered under the reigns of successive monarchs. Scharf had similarly intended to fasten signs to the walls of the Ancient Masters saloons at Manchester 'to mark the various schools and leading dates', but this idea, along with his proposal to attach labels to the pictures, was ruled out by the organizing committee.<sup>468</sup> In a report to the Trustees, Scharf describes the effect of his design at South Kensington:

In the large space near, and at the foot of, the eastern staircase the more modern portraits were collected to meet the general public on first coming in, and actually to form a termination to the series to those who had followed the regular course commencing at the extreme end upstairs and proceeding westward, down the western staircase and returning eastward on the ground floor.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> Victoria Whitfield, 'The illustrious or infamous dead'; The Portrait Gallery of the Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition', in Leahy ed., *Art, City, Spectacle*, p.42; see also Helen Rees Leahy, *Museum bodies: the politics and practices of visiting and viewing* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), p.54.

<sup>467</sup> These were largely half-length casts taken from tomb effigies in Westminster Abbey. Whilst the monuments underwent a programme of cleaning and repairs from 1869, Dean A.P. Stanley (NPG Trustee, 1866–81) gave permission for Domenico Brucciani to execute plaster casts for the Gallery. These were subsequently electrotyped by the Birmingham firm Elkington & Co. Scharf's decision to display the casts upright on low benches skirting the walls of the vestibule is worth noting. His annual Trustees' report for 1872 justifies this strategy to enhance their accessibility: '[The effigies] of the earlier sovereigns as they are placed in Westminster Abbey, being all in a recumbent position, and considerably elevated beyond the reach of the spectator, are almost useless for special purposes of portraiture'; George Scharf, 19 Apr. 1872, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1872*, p.3, HAL; see also Martina Droth et al., *Sculpture Victorious: Art in an Age of Invention, 1837–1901*, (New Haven: YUP, 2014), pp.167–8 (47).

<sup>468</sup> George Scharf, 'On the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857', p.314.

<sup>469</sup> George Scharf, transcript in minutes of the 147<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 10 May 1879, NPG 1/3, p.163, HAL. This arrangement is in essence maintained to this day, with the earliest portraits displayed on the top floor of

In thus arranging the portraits, Scharf simultaneously facilitated chronological advancement and presented the incoming visitor with the culmination of the historical sequence.<sup>470</sup> Scharf's positioning of likenesses of celebrated nineteenth-century figures including George Eliot [NPG 669] and Michael Faraday [NPG 269] in the entrance vestibule and along the staircase, can be seen in a series of photographs of the galleries taken by Praetorius and Wood & Co. in 1885 (fig. 52). I propose that by deliberately placing the Gallery's replica of Albert by Winterhalter [NPG 237] at the head of the eastward progression - joined later by Victoria after Heinrich von Angeli [NPG 708] - he sought to realize Cunningham's dramatic intention of over two decades earlier (fig. 53).<sup>471</sup>

#### 4.4 South Kensington's exhibitionary regime

Lara Perry suggests that Scharf's interventions with regards to the chronological ordering of the collection placed viewers under a 'disciplinary regime', through which they were directed to take a 'serious, concentrated and historical view of the portraits'.<sup>472</sup> Yet, whilst the objective of his system is clear, the archive yields little indication of its success. Scharf admits that his design to illustrate the long sweep of history up to the achievements of his contemporaries would have been effective only 'to those who had followed the regular course'.<sup>473</sup> He concedes an element of choice, noting that his arrangement also allowed visitors – if they preferred – to 'pursue the stream of time backwards by proceeding in a westerly direction on the lower floor'.<sup>474</sup> Colin Trodd usefully surveys and critiques a considerable body of theoretical material produced during the last twenty years on the function of the art museum. Central to this literature is the application of Michel Foucault's social theories on the disciplinary technologies of societal institutions dedicated to the

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the gallery at St Martin's Place, and the pictures of contemporary sitters hung throughout the ground floor Lerner Galleries, adjacent to the main entrance.

<sup>470</sup> This was in direct accordance with the then dominant progressive or 'Whiggish' view of history, which interpreted past events as part of a general evolution towards the sophistications of the present day; see Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York: Norton, 1965); and John W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge; New York: CUP, 1983).

<sup>471</sup> See Anon., 'The National Portrait Gallery', *The Times*, 11 Dec. 1882, p.8

<sup>472</sup> Perry, 'Looking like a Woman', p.126.

<sup>473</sup> George Scharf, transcript in minutes of the 147<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 10 May 1879, NPG 1/3, p.163, HAL.

<sup>474</sup> George Scharf, transcript in minutes of the 147<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 10 May 1879, NPG 1/3, p.163, HAL.

modification of behaviour (such as the prison or the lunatic asylum), to the historic and modern workings of the museum, which Trodd identifies as having led to customary definitions of art museums as 'places of authority, implicated in the formation and development of systems of social regulation'.<sup>475</sup> He focuses on the work of Foucault-inspired museologist Tony Bennett, whose seminal 1995 text *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory and Politics* essentially defines the Victorian museum as 'determined by hegemonic forces that overwhelm any real sense of social agency', a place that effectively programmed visitors and produced 'docile bodies'.<sup>476</sup> Bennett contends that one element of this conditioning centred on the concept of organized walking or the provision of linear pathways through exhibition spaces. In this sense the 'narrative machinery' of the museum encouraged a performance that was both bodily and mental, 'inasmuch as the evolutionary narratives it substantiated were realised spatially in the form of routes that the visitor was expected – and often obliged – to follow'.<sup>477</sup> Similarly, in their 1980 essay on the development of the Universal Survey Museum, Carol Duncan and Andrew Wallach position the museum as an architectural phenomenon 'that selects and arranges works within a sequence of spaces. This totality of art and architectural form organizes the visitor's experience as a script organizes a performance'.<sup>478</sup> More recent scholarship however, seeks to question the validity of this dominant theoretical framework. Tim Barringer, for example, asserts the potential of nineteenth-century gallery audiences to in fact 'look against the grain'.<sup>479</sup> He rejects Bennett's thesis as a 'museology of paranoia – the notion that every aspect of the museum's operation represents a sinister and calculated manifestation of the state's power to discipline', arguing instead that the Victorian museum can be seen as a site of 'widely varied individual response'.<sup>480</sup> In her study of the development of Victorian municipal museums Kate Hill takes a pragmatic view, pointing out that the administrators of these institutions lacked both the funds and the resources for such elaborate

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<sup>475</sup> Trodd, 'The Discipline of Pleasure', p.18. For scholarship inspired by notions of the museum as a disciplinary structure see, for example, Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*; and Duncan, *Civilising Rituals*.

<sup>476</sup> Trodd, 'The Discipline of Pleasure', p.21.

<sup>477</sup> Bennett's exploration of the nineteenth-century museum as 'backteller', is particularly pertinent to the early NPG: see Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, p.178.

<sup>478</sup> Duncan and Wallach, 'The Universal Survey Museum', p. 450.

<sup>479</sup> Timothy J. Barringer, 'Victorian Culture and the Museum: Before and After the White Cube', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 11, no. 1 (2006), p.138.

<sup>480</sup> Barringer, 'Victorian Culture and the Museum', p.138.

manipulation, as well as the motivation.<sup>481</sup> Likewise problematizing Foucauldian ideas as applied to the art gallery, Giles Waterfield in his recent work cites anxieties expressed by custodians over the unpredictable behaviour of contemporary audiences as proof that these cultural spaces were neither controlling nor intimidating.<sup>482</sup>

Alternatively, Andrew McClellan accepts the concept of the art museum as a disciplinary structure, arguing that it was ‘clearly the case’ that nineteenth-century administrators sought to promote orderly conduct and good behaviour.<sup>483</sup> I concur that in the case of the NPG at South Kensington, Scharf introduced measures intended not only to regulate movement around the galleries, but to control the very manner in which the collection was consumed. Yet crucially he could only encourage a prescribed process of rational viewing, and was ultimately unable to determine the nature of the visitor’s experience. Indeed, an investigation into visitor responses to the National Portrait Gallery during the 1870s appears to support the arguments of the revisionist trend outlined above. Examples are not systematic and principally consist of second-hand reports compiled during busy Easter holiday weekends, when the proportion of working class visitors was at its highest. The general absence of material directly documenting audience reaction is frustrating, the majority of evidence having been mediated by Scharf himself.<sup>484</sup> Moreover, examples that have been identified often prove conflicting. Overtly positive accounts of good conduct regularly found their way from written drafts to official documents or press reports, in justification of one or other of his curatorial schemes (see, for example, Chapter 5).<sup>485</sup> For instance, an article in the *Daily News* describing visitors to the NPG during Easter 1872 seems somewhat contrived. Focusing on the use of object handlists distributed each year, the following description of orderly viewing and rigorous engagement in the Gallery bears the imprint of Scharf’s influence:

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<sup>481</sup> Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums*, p.48 & pp.103–4.

<sup>482</sup> Waterfield, *The People’s Galleries*, p.4 & p.37.

<sup>483</sup> McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao*, p.26.

<sup>484</sup> Perry acknowledges the problem of missing information relating to contemporary visitor responses, and its implications for drawing successful conclusions about the effectiveness of nineteenth-century museums; see Perry, *History’s Beauties*, p.127. On this subject see also Kenneth Hudson, *A Social History of Museums: What the Visitors Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp.6–7; and Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums*, pp.125–7.

<sup>485</sup> Eileen Hooper-Greenhill suggests that Scharf, in his statements for the annual reports, remains conscious of the roles accorded to museums during the period and makes ‘clear how efficacious the Gallery is in producing good behaviour’. Yet, she concedes it is the gaps in the official narrative that suggest matters might not have been ‘quite so rosy’; see Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.47.

[T]he same faces of the sightseers are noticeable year after year. Working men who at their first visit have obtained the printed lists of the portraits, with the necessary explanatory names and dates, which, with the judicious liberality, are distributed gratis, bring them back when they return, and go about with the old and new lists in hand comparing the editions made since they were last in the gallery. It is not uncommon to see the father of a family giving his children an easy lesson in history, by pointing out to them the various historical personages, and telling them who they were, and what they did.<sup>486</sup>

This conjured impression of purposeful movement and structured learning, facilitated by the chronological ordering of the collection, represents an ideal.<sup>487</sup> Helen Rees Leahy has examined efforts to condition both physical and mental responses to the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition, suggesting that the educational arrangement of the art works and the spatial organization of the building 'were devised to direct visitors' walking and looking in a systematic and productive alliance'.<sup>488</sup> Yet her analysis of visitor responses in 1857 supports her assertion of the failure of this regime, about which she reasons: 'our own experience tells us that the performance of an exhibition's lessons is often half-hearted, tiring or confusing'.<sup>489</sup> Furthermore, McClellan asserts that during the Victorian Era a 'rhetoric of aspiration' informed institutional discourse and mission statements 'and tells us more about what a museum aimed to do for its visitors than what it actually did'.<sup>490</sup> I argue that such a discrepancy - between Scharf's intentions and the realities of individual engagement with the collection - also applied to the NPG at South Kensington.

In contrast to the above report, for example, an annotated copy of the handlist dating from the same Easter weekend documents examples of altogether more cursory and less

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<sup>486</sup> Anon., 'Sightseers at the National Portrait Gallery', *Daily News*, 6 Apr. 1872 (cutting), NPG20/1, HAL. Indeed, this account bears a close resemblance to Scharf's report of the use of handlists during the 1865 Easter opening (see George Scharf, 28 Apr. 1865, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1865*, p.3, HAL).

<sup>487</sup> I do not suggest that reports of orderly conduct or studious attention exercised by members of the public were fabricated, simply that their one-sidedness makes them unreliable as indicators of the Gallery's overall success.

<sup>488</sup> Helen Rees Leahy, 'Walking for Pleasure'? Bodies of Display at the Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition in 1857', *Art History*, 30, no. 4 (Sep. 1, 2007), p.549.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid. See also Leahy, *Museum bodies*, pp.45–73, and on the performative aspects of museum visiting see Duncan, *Civilising Rituals*, pp.7–20.

<sup>490</sup> Andrew McClellan, *Art and Its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2003), p.7.

disciplined interactions with the portraits on display.<sup>491</sup> In the margins of the printed sheet, Scharf has noted down what appear to be the direct reflections of a number of visitors to the Gallery upon encountering some of the modern pictures. On such popular occasions he exercised his long-established habit of 'mingling with the crowd' in the exhibition space, gathering observations on the portraits or persons represented.<sup>492</sup> One can picture Scharf hovering in one of the bays of the long gallery, ears pricked to listen to a group of 'boys' congregated around the recently purchased portrait of Sir Walter Scott in his study at Abbotsford (fig. 54), exclaiming over 'All old fashioned antiquities he's got'.<sup>493</sup> Whilst recognizing the bust of Shakespeare in the background of the composition and admiring the dog, they fail to remark upon the significance of the sitter at all. Similarly, one 'working man' when confronted with the portrait of the Prince Consort [NPG 237] is most impressed with the details of his dress, commenting to a companion: 'Ah the Poor Prince - perhaps you don't remember him. I do...Isn't it splendid, you can see all the nap on his coat - look at the sleeve and the table - Look at that gentleman - the Queen's husband'.<sup>494</sup> He also records one visitor's utterance in relation to a portrait of the pedagogue Samuel Parr [NPG 9], which would certainly not have been corroborated by a passing glance at the hand list or accompanying picture label: 'Oh Oh Dr. Parr he lived 200 years, said by a girl'.<sup>495</sup> Furthermore, Scharf's Secretary's journals demonstrate the inability of Gallery staff to control visitor behaviour. In an extreme example, he records an act of 'willful damage' perpetrated the previous year: 'Darbon & Fright reported that as soon as they arrived at the Gallery this morning they perceived circular marks & long strokes done by some blunt point on the pictures of Garrick [NPG 82] & Goldsmith [NPG 130]. They are not high up and may have been done by some foolish lad'.<sup>496</sup> On this occasion a member of the public 'rebukes rather than obeys the coded messages' of the exhibition space.<sup>497</sup> This suggests that, despite Scharf's carefully conceived

<sup>491</sup> See also Perry, *History's Beauties*, pp.132–4, on the superficial nature of visitor responses at the National Portrait Gallery. For a full transcript of Scharf's draft report of the 1871 Easter opening, on which Perry bases her account, see Appendix V.

<sup>492</sup> Anon., 'The National Portrait Gallery', *Quarterly Review*, April 1888, p.357.

<sup>493</sup> George Scharf's annotations to the 1872 Easter handlist, 1 Apr. 1872, *NPG Gratis Lists, 1863–1875*, HAL.

<sup>494</sup> George Scharf, *NPG Gratis Lists, 1863–1875*, HAL, original emphasis.

<sup>495</sup> George Scharf, *NPG Gratis Lists, 1863–1875*, HAL.

<sup>496</sup> George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 6 Feb. 1871, NPG7/1/1/1/3, HAL. Scharf records further instances of intentional damage at South Kensington, on 22 Feb. 1878 and 28 Aug. 1879.

<sup>497</sup> Leahy, 'Walking for Pleasure', p.549. Scharf was particularly anxious about the threat to the portraits when the bays of the gallery were crowded at its busiest times. This was a problem also common to the South Kensington Museum, where Henry Cole felt the need to post signs in the Sheepskanks Galleries 'reminding visitors that they



instructional programme, he was in reality unable to regulate either the physical actions of visitors in the gallery or the intellectual consumption of the collection.

#### 4.5 'Banishment' to Bethnal Green and thoughts towards St Martin's Place

In July 1885 a special meeting of the Trustees was held in the office of the First Commissioner of Works, to discuss the serious risk from fire to which the collection was exposed at South Kensington. This had been a concern for a number of years, Scharf on one occasion sketching the proliferation of storage sheds and other flammable material surrounding the gallery buildings, which were largely constructed of wood.<sup>498</sup> The meeting was rapidly convened after fire actually broke out at the Inventions Exhibition in the India Museum, next door to the National Portrait Gallery in the Royal Horticultural Society's arcades.<sup>499</sup> After a report from the Fire Commissioner was read concluding that nothing could be done to make the buildings on the site fire-proof, it was resolved that the portraits be transferred as a loan to the Bethnal Green Museum (now the Museum of Childhood), an outpost of the South Kensington Museum in east London.<sup>500</sup> The Gallery was assigned the upper floor of the museum building, above permanent displays of food, animal and waste products, and other temporary loan collections organized by the Science and Art Department (fig. 55).<sup>501</sup> Although it was agreed that the NPG should be housed here for no more than two years, the government's persistent failure to provide alternative accommodation ensured that

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were "shareholders" in the collection and asking them to protect the art from mischief'; Dianne Sachko Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity* (New York: CUP, 1996), p.61.

<sup>498</sup> See drawing by George Scharf, 20 May 1880, NPG66/2/1/5/1, HAL. For further mention of the risk of fire to the collection see minutes of the 124<sup>th</sup> & 164<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Board of Trustees, 20 Mar. 1874 & 6 Nov. 1882, NPG 1/3, p.3 & pp.29–31, HAL.

<sup>499</sup> 'We are all right but a severe fire rages at the entrance to exh. The wind favours us'; George Scharf to Charles Stewart Hardinge (copy of telegram), 12 Jun. 1885, NPG66/3/1/1, HAL.

<sup>500</sup> This meant that the NPG now had no choice but to assume the extended opening hours practised by the South Kensington Museum, a loss of control that caused Scharf no little concern: 'It will be impossible for us to object to night exhibition in Bethnal Green, especially where the electric light is. But I suspect that gas is mixed with it. I shall have to go to Bethnal Green to reconnoitre "administration"; Geroge Scharf to Charles Stewart Hardinge, 17 Jul. 1885, NPG66/3/1/1, HAL, original emphasis.

<sup>501</sup> See Thomas Greenwood, *Museums and Art Galleries* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co, 1888), p.262. Prior to the NPG's residence a major loan to Bethnal Green included Sir Richard Wallace's art collection; see Barbara Lasic, 'Going East: the Wallace Collection at Bethnal Green, 1872–1875', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 26, no. 2 (Jul. 1, 2014): 249–61. As NPG trustee, Wallace suggested the move from South Kensington to Bethnal Green, although he later regretted it on account of the use of gas in the Museum (see Richard Wallace to Charles Stewart Hardinge, nd. but Jul. 1885, NPG66/3/1/1, HAL).

Bethnal Green remained the Gallery's home until the move to St Martin's Place in 1896.<sup>502</sup>

This marked a period of stagnation with regards to Scharf's active involvement with the organization, display and interpretation of the collection. With characteristic thoroughness he spent time before the move creating 'Wall Map Lists', sketching the position of the portraits whilst still on the walls at South Kensington and including the registration number for each object (fig. 56).<sup>503</sup> This was undoubtedly part of his process of archiving the hang, but was also presumably intended to preserve the chronological arrangement of the collection and thus aid the transition to the new location. However, officers of the department oversaw the physical placement of the portraits at Bethnal Green, seemingly without reference to Scharf's notes.<sup>504</sup> This extract from his report to the Trustees following the removal, indicates his distance from the process:

Numerous small tablets giving dates are placed above the screens and cornices which would be very useful, but some of them appear to be arbitrarily applied. The reckoning & arranging according to the date of death as adopted in Lodge's Portraits, and in most collective series, do not here seem to be adopted.<sup>505</sup>

At South Kensington Scharf had attempted to shape visitor experience through the careful ordering of the portraits, the spatial articulation of the collection and the introduction of signposts directing flow through the galleries. These measures being only half-heartedly applied at Bethnal Green resulted in the virtual redundancy of his efforts. Nor did Scharf himself move with the collection to the East End. Premises were again leased in Westminster, this time at 20 Great George Street, serving as a base for his operations. Although only occasionally visiting the museum in person, he supervised proceedings by means of weekly reports from Charles Edwards, his official at Bethnal Green, largely relating to environmental conditions and picture cleaning.<sup>506</sup> The Trustees continued to acquire portraits at their usual

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<sup>502</sup> The Trustees were to regularly remind the government of their broken pledge to provide an alternative site, in their annual reports and by way of articles in the press. Competing claims for increased accommodation from other institutions, including the National Gallery and the British Museum, contributed to the Treasury's failure to commit funds to the NPG.

<sup>503</sup> See 'Wall Map Lists', 1885, NPG66/2/2/6–7, HAL.

<sup>504</sup> It had been agreed by the Trustees prior to the move that the arranging of pictures and busts would be undertaken by Science and Art departmental officials; see minutes of the 177<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 18 Jul. 1885, NPG 1/4, p.131, HAL.

<sup>505</sup> George Scharf, transcript in minutes of the 178<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 24 Mar. 1886, NPG 1/4, p.141, HAL.

<sup>506</sup> See NPG66/3/2/1–11, HAL. Environmental conditions in the iron and glass structure at Bethnal Green were less than ideal; Scharf lamented the 'perishing condition' of many of the portraits since their removal, especially

rate, but these were kept at the Gallery offices rather than being integrated with the collection on display, which remained generally unchanged. Though the promise of some central London exhibition space was secured from the Government, this failed to materialize. According to Scharf's preference that new accessions were not to be 'relegated to the East End' upon entering the collection, an arrangement was made with the National Gallery to instead display some of the larger acquisitions in the vestibule of their building (see Chapter 2).<sup>507</sup> Further pictures were stored in the basement at Trafalgar Square in the late 1880s, when space on the stairs and in the Boardroom at Great George Street became particularly stretched. The desire to retain these important acquisitions for display in Westminster speaks significantly of Scharf's attitude towards the new location of the NPG in the capital. Lara Perry argues that the move east pushed to the forefront a 'hitherto implicit premise' about the Gallery's intended primary audience.<sup>508</sup> She quotes Scharf's written concern that '[t]he most cultivated and professional class of London cannot spare the time required in performing pilgrimages of this nature unless indeed some very strong motive arises'<sup>509</sup>, as evidence of his conclusion that the collection held little value for the tradesmen and other working class inhabitants of Bethnal Green. Perry further proposes that the move coincided with a re-conception of the NPG in the closing decades of the 1800s, along aesthetic lines: 'Where the Gallery's early history was directly and explicitly involved in the construction of the political and economic nation, by the end of the century it was relatively clear its function was seen in the context of catering for the appreciation of the Fine Arts'.<sup>510</sup> This shift in emphasis manifested itself through a mounting concern with the artistic calibre of the collection encouraged by Charles Stewart Hardinge, the second Chairman of the Board, and other aesthetically-minded Trustees.<sup>511</sup>

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following the ingress of melted snow-water in the winter of 1887 (see George Scharf, undated notes, NPG66/3/1/3, HAL).

<sup>507</sup> See nt. 272.

<sup>508</sup> Perry, *The National Portrait Gallery and its constituencies, 1858–96*, p.151.

<sup>509</sup> Notes by George Scharf for unidentified speech/report, 'A few rough observations on the importance of Centralization', 7 Apr. 1889, NPG66/3/1/3, HAL.

<sup>510</sup> Perry, *Facing Femininities*, p.66. This corresponds to what Andrew McClellan defines as a fundamental shift towards 'aesthetic idealism', widely identifiable in art museums at the end of the nineteenth century: see McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao*, p.178.

<sup>511</sup> These included Coutts Lindsay, painter and proprietor of the Grosvenor Gallery, Richard Wallace, art collector and philanthropist, and artist Sir John Everett Millais. On Hardinge's tenure as Chairman, see Chapter 3. Perry observes that evidence of the 'existence of the aesthetic gaze' amongst members of the Board only begins to be officially recorded during Hardinge's chairmanship; see Perry, *Facing Femininities*, p.118.

Numerous historians of the nineteenth-century museum have drawn upon the pioneering work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, in particular his examination of the subjective engagement of visitors with art museums.<sup>512</sup> Although focusing upon the socio-economic composition of visitors to European museums in the 1960s, scholars have nonetheless underlined the relevance of his cultural theories as applied to museum audiences of an earlier age. Analysing the results of a comprehensive study of museum participation conducted with statistician Alain Darbel between 1964 and 1965 Bourdieu centrally concludes that a visitor's capacity to access works of art on display intellectually, is directly dependent upon his or her possession of educational or 'cultural capital', which in turn is dependent upon an individual's social and familial background. Thus the art museum essentially functions as a space that reinforces 'for some the feeling of belonging and for others the feeling of exclusion'.<sup>513</sup> Andrew McClellan acknowledges Bourdieu and Darbel's summation that the museum-visiting public consisted overwhelmingly of the 'cultivated classes', and that art museums 'helped maintain the status quo by assuming knowledge in visitors and failing to help the uninitiated make proper sense of what they saw'.<sup>514</sup> Arguably this effect can be traced back through the history of public institutions to the formative decades of their existence. For example, Kate Hill and Nick Prior both explore the idea that the founders and administrators of nineteenth-century museums, ostensibly motivated by a desire to educate the working class and dissolve distinctions between social groupings, in reality succeeded in strengthening and legitimizing class divisions.<sup>515</sup> With regards to the National Portrait Gallery of the later 1800s, it could be argued that 'the Gallery' (by which I indicate both the collection and the activities of Scharf and the Trustees) found itself best equipped to address an audience that brought along with it the intellectual tools to engage in artistic appreciation, and at least a basic understanding of the major events and protagonists of British History.<sup>516</sup>

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<sup>512</sup> See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste* (London: Routledge, 2010); and Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, with Dominique Schnapper, trans. Caroline Beattie and Nick Merriman, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

<sup>513</sup> Bourdieu, Darbel, and Schnapper, *The Love of Art*, p.112.

<sup>514</sup> Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao*, p.178.

<sup>515</sup> See Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums*, pp.53–68 & p.144; and Prior, *Museums and Modernity*, pp.52–7. For Bourdieu's theories as applied more widely to the nineteenth-century middle class, see Simon Gunn, 'Translating Bourdieu: Cultural Capital and the English Middle Class in Historical Perspective', *The British Journal of Sociology* 56, no. 1 (Mar. 1, 2005), pp.49–64.

<sup>516</sup> It is worth clarifying here that Bourdieu's theories apply to capacities for the aesthetic appreciation of artworks. In terms of the NPG's audience, I am also arguing for the necessary possession of cultural capital, though I interpret this more widely to additionally include an ability to appreciate historical figures and their significance within the national narrative. This is reflective of the Gallery's hybrid nature as a museum of both art and history.

Perry maintains that, henceforth appealing explicitly to a more sophisticated gallery visitor and promoting a new brand of aesthetic elitism, the NPG at Bethnal Green found itself out of place amongst the other philanthropic collections of east and south London (including the Whitechapel and South London art galleries) that offered a straightforward programme of 'improving' visual education for the working class.<sup>517</sup> I wish to qualify this by asserting that firstly, although artistic merit became a more prominent factor in the acquisition process, this was never at the expense of the general educational rationale of the collection.<sup>518</sup> Rather, it was a luxury afforded by the increasingly comprehensive nature of the collected portraits as a representation of the nation's history, as well as the opportunity to acquire significant art works on the open market prompted by the Settled Lands Acts of 1882 and 1884 (see Chapter 2). In a letter to the Secretary of 1879, Hardinge writes in justification of his suggestion that the President of the Royal Academy be appointed to the Board as *ex officio* Trustee: 'We have now so good a foundation to work upon that we can afford to be particular & for this we want not of learned research, but keen appreciation of what is really good in an aesthetic sense'.<sup>519</sup> Secondly, I posit that Scharf did not question the appropriateness of Bethnal Green's working class audience per se, but rather the conditions of viewing (or lack of) that this new exhibition space facilitated. In his Secretary's report for 1887, Scharf compares these unfavourably with the Gallery's previous location:

Whilst at South Kensington the portraits were placed in such a position that visitors only who desired to see them had access. In the present locality they are amalgamated with the general contents of the Museum, and there is no means of distinguishing such visitors as enter with the express purpose of studying the portraits from those who are attracted by very different objects.<sup>520</sup>

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<sup>517</sup> See Perry, *Facing Femininities*, pp.58–9. For an examination of these philanthropic institutions, see Giles Waterfield ed., *Art for the People: Culture in the Slums of Late Victorian Britain* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1994), pp.31–64. Amy Woodson-Boulton makes a further distinction between the aesthetic exclusivity fostered by the advent of modernism and the more widely accessible 'truths' of Victorian narrative art; see Woodson-Boulton, *Transformative Beauty*, p.150.

<sup>518</sup> Brandon Taylor maintains that although the balance was shifting during the period, historical rather than artistic validity remained the central criterion for acquisition; see Taylor, *Art for the Nation*, p.96.

<sup>519</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 2 Feb. 1879, NPG7/1/1/4/15, HAL; see also Perry, *Facing Femininities*, p.118.

<sup>520</sup> George Scharf, 4 Jun. 1887, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1887*, pp.13–14, HAL. Specific visitors to the NPG at South Kensington were distinguished by means of turn styles at the western end of the gallery, through which they were required to pass from the rest of the building, and a separate eastern entrance off Exhibition road.

It is this lack of intentionality that he felt negated the potential of the collection. Highlighting the dissipating effect of the 'multifarious contents' of the Museum, Scharf describes the scene at Bethnal Green during the display of the Queen's Jubilee gifts in the same year:

[T]here is little probability that those who came in gave a single thought to the portraits stowed away upstairs in the gallery. Such persons as did make their way above generally spent their time in looking over the railings on the busy crowd below...on "off days" the portraits are comparatively deserted excepting when children break the dullness of the scene by playing hide & seek or running up and down the staircases!<sup>521</sup>

In contrast, and in accordance with Bourdieu's argument for the necessity of educational capital, the ideal visitor to the National Portrait Gallery needed to possess a spark of previous interest or a basis of prior knowledge, which could be built upon in an organized and purposeful fashion. Yet conversely, Scharf recognized that this quality was not the sole preserve of the middle or educated classes, but one he had identified as early as 1863 amongst working class visitors to Great George Street. Reporting to Lord Stanhope on the Easter opening, Scharf is keen to relay the fact that despite the Gallery's location in a 'small obscure quarter, people on holiday times press anxiously *to see these portraits alone* and, I am happy to state also, seem to dwell & linger with much interest as shows them to be readers & thinkers, evidently bringing some previous knowledge of the subject with them'.<sup>522</sup> This is in line with Bourdieu's further assertion that in fact the 'cultural aspiration' of some museum visitors clearly outstrips formal education, and that the cultural capital possessed by an individual cannot always be neatly equated with his or her social background or educational qualifications.<sup>523</sup> Indeed, as McClellan convincingly argues in relation to the Victorian art museum, 'the ideal public consisted of those most eager to help themselves'.<sup>524</sup> It is with this in mind that we can begin to interpret Scharf's later statement in support of the removal of the portraits from the East End: 'Lighter & more varied food would probably suit the frequenters of galleries in the outlying districts. Portraits are not in themselves popular and

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<sup>521</sup> Copy of unaddressed letter from George Scharf (probably intended for publication), 11 Mar. 1889, NPG66/3/1/3, HAL.

<sup>522</sup> George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 7 Apr. 1863, U1590/O186/6, KHLC, emphasis mine. See also Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums*, p.131, on 'respectable' and 'rough' members of the working classes.

<sup>523</sup> Bourdieu, Darbel, and Schnapper, *The Love of Art*, p.15. On Bourdieu's rule of cultural aspiration, see also Michael Grenfell and Cheryl Hardy, *Art Rules Pierre Bourdieu and the Visual Arts* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2007), pp.67–8.

<sup>524</sup> McClellan, *Art and Its Publics*, p.11.

require a great amount of ready knowledge and previous study. They are solid & heavy of digestion'.<sup>525</sup> Scharf here makes the distinction between the general audiences that largely frequented the Bethnal Green Museum and the intentional, receptive visitors that the National Portrait Gallery could address. This was a concern he had similarly applied to the appreciation of Old Masters, doubting that the majority of people who crowded to the Art Treasures Exhibition derived any special benefit from the display 'beyond what *good copies* educationally arranged would have afforded them. A Sydenham [Crystal] Palace combining pleasure with education would have been more beneficial'.<sup>526</sup> He wonders what the effect would have been had the organizers instead taken more time over it 'and during three years instead of one, *disseminated preparatory instruction* among the lower classes'.<sup>527</sup>

Notwithstanding the unfavourable locality of Bethnal Green, the static nature of the collection whilst at the Museum and Scharf's detachment from its day-to-day management, he had to admit that in fact the portraits had 'never before been so advantageously displayed'.<sup>528</sup> The gallery walls were moderately high and pictures were also hung uniformly across free-standing screens, on which none were raised above eye level (see fig. 57). As he observed to the Trustees: 'This principle is a very important one, and it would be a great mistake in any future construction of a permanent nature for the Gallery to allow pictures to be placed at a higher level'.<sup>529</sup> This had been a problem at Great George Street and also at South Kensington, when the expanding collection had initially been restricted to the eastern portion of the upper arcade. Three years after the move, Scharf reported that '[w]ant of space both for the pictures and for sculpture is again beginning to make itself severely felt. Many of the portraits are of necessity placed so high on the walls as to be no longer distinguished with clearness'.<sup>530</sup>

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<sup>525</sup> Notes by George Scharf for unidentified speech/report, 7 Apr. 1889, NPG66/3/1/3, HAL.

<sup>526</sup> George Scharf, 'On the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857', pp.312–3, original emphasis.

<sup>527</sup> George Scharf, 'On the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857', p.314, original emphasis. In light of this it is interesting to note that there is no evidence of a comparable scheme to disseminate preparatory instruction on the NPG's collection amongst the inhabitants of Bethnal Green.

<sup>528</sup> George Scharf, transcript in minutes of the 187<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 30 Apr. 1889, NPG 1/4, p.217, HAL.

<sup>529</sup> George Scharf, transcript in minutes of the 178<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 24 Mar. 1886, NPG 1/4, p.140, HAL. At Manchester Scharf had been frustrated by the organizing committee's refusal to agree a system of vertically rotating the dense hang to bring pictures 'for a while nearer on a level with the spectator'; George Scharf, 'On the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857', p.317.

<sup>530</sup> George Scharf, 5 May 1873, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1873*, p.3, HAL. The crowded hang and its negative effect on viewing conditions had been debated since mid-century; John Ruskin among others called for an end to this practice at the National Gallery, in favour of the display of pictures at eye level: see Charlotte Klonk, 'Mounting Vision: Charles Eastlake and the National Gallery of London', *The Art Bulletin*, 82 (Jun 1., 2000), p.335.

Therefore when Ewan Christian, the architect appointed to design a purpose-built gallery at St Martin's Place, requested from Scharf a list of requirements for the new building the latter instructed Christian to refer to the physical character of the display at Bethnal Green, which he described as 'excellent & deserving of imitation'.<sup>531</sup> William Henry Alexander, an art collector and philanthropist, had donated funds for a building in 1889, on the proviso that the Government supply a suitable site within a one and a half mile radius of St James's Street, Westminster.<sup>532</sup> Land was duly provided adjacent to the National Gallery on the north side of Trafalgar Square. Although the exterior elevation was designed to reference to some extent the connecting National Gallery building, Scharf insisted that internally the two buildings remain entirely separate.<sup>533</sup> This was intended not only to preserve the autonomy of the National Portrait Gallery but also to distance it from the lofty architectural spaces of the National Gallery, which he considered inappropriate for the display of the NPG's collection.<sup>534</sup> Portraiture could rather be shown to best effect within dimensions of a more domestic nature, fostering the potential for intimate communion between the viewer and the authentic likeness (see Chapter 1). As early as 1867, when reporting to the Office of Works on the general requirements for a permanent gallery, Scharf advocated the division of space into a series of modestly-sized 'apartments' whereby 'the classification of subjects would be greatly facilitated and objects more readily found'.<sup>535</sup> This paralleled Gustav Waagen's 1853 manifesto on the future of the National Gallery, in which he proposed that the size of the exhibition rooms should be in proportion to the type of work on display:

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<sup>531</sup> George Scharf, *'Requirements for a National Portrait Gallery'* (draft notes), 24 May 1889, NPG66/4/1/2, HAL. A transcript of a letter recorded in the minutes of the 189<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees (25 Jun. 1889) confirms that the architect acted upon Scharf's advice: 'I paid a visit to Bethnal Green on Saturday last, and was greatly interested in what I saw there. I took rough notes of the surfaces covered and of the heights required' (NPG 1/4, p.231, HAL).

<sup>532</sup> Although this move brought the Gallery back within the rarefied environment of the National Gallery, the Royal Academy and the art dealers of the West End, Alexander's aim was to ensure its accessibility to all his 'countrymen'. In 1892 he requested Hardinge's assistance in securing the Sunday opening of the museum, 'so enabling the respectable lower classes to enjoy the pictures'; William Henry Alexander to Charles Stewart Hardinge, 6 Feb. 1892, NPG75/2/1, HAL. General Sunday opening was put into effect at St Martin's Place in May 1896, although selected private visitors had been admitted to the NPG on Sundays from the 1870s (see NPG75/1/6–7, HAL).

<sup>533</sup> The buildings were separated internally by solid walls, Scharf specifying: 'No communication to exist whatever between the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery'; see George Scharf, *'Requirements for a National Portrait Gallery'* (draft notes), 24 May 1889, NPG66/4/1/2, HAL. See also Taylor, *Art for the Nation*, pp.96–7. For a discussion of the design of the exterior and interior of the 1896 building, see Graham Hulme, Brian Buchanan, Ken Powell, and John Goto, *The National Portrait Gallery: An Architectural History* (London: NPG, 2000), pp.101–39.

<sup>534</sup> See Charles Saumarez Smith, *The National Portrait Gallery* (London: NPG, 1997), p.19.

<sup>535</sup> George Scharf, transcript in minutes of the 89<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 4 Dec. 1867, NPG 1/2, p.47, HAL.



The apartments for hanging the pictures must be numerous, and should vary in height as well as size; small pictures lose extremely not only in a large, but likewise in too high a room; and from this circumstance they have the significant name of cabinet pictures. The rooms for large pictures should not be more spacious than to allow the spectator to contemplate a moderate number from the distance which the artist's intention prescribes.<sup>536</sup>

By the end of his career, although scale remained a concern, Scharf prioritized the inclusion of continuous upper galleries 'to favour chronological sequence'.<sup>537</sup> Drawing upon the central characteristic of the display at South Kensington, this suggestion reflects Scharf's ongoing engagement with what Christopher Whitehead identifies as a substantial contemporary 'body of thinking on the subject of how architecture could articulate groups of objects into narratives of the history of art' (as noted above).<sup>538</sup> In the case of the National Portrait Gallery's collection, gallery space could be similarly employed in emphasising the linear progression of British history. Whitehead locates this capacity within a 'passive' mode of communication inherent in museum architecture, its scope being 'fundamentally that of facilitating, rather than influencing, the physical placing of objects in discursive order'.<sup>539</sup> These connecting rooms of standard height were to be top lit, with windows blocked out to maximize wall space. Where windows were unavoidable on the lower floors, they needed to be high up to avoid 'shine' on the pictures on the opposite walls: 'a great difficulty which was experienced in the S. Kensington arcades to the last and was unalterable'.<sup>540</sup> This anticipated variance in the quality of lighting acted as a determining factor in a seemingly contradictory 'Scheme for Moving and Hanging Pictures', developed by Scharf for the new building. In what must have been one of his last pieces of official work for the Gallery, he suggests the division

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<sup>536</sup> Waagen, 'Thoughts on the New Building to be Erected for the new National Gallery of England', p. 101. In 1867 Scharf similarly suggested the benefit of variously sized rooms, 'some being smaller and on a different level for the display of minuter [sic] objects, such as medallions, miniatures, statuettes and engravings'. (George Scharf, transcript in minutes of the 89<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 4 Dec. 1867, NPG 1/2, p.47, HAL)

<sup>537</sup> George Scharf, 'Requirements for a National Portrait Gallery' (draft notes), 24 May 1889, NPG66/4/1/2, HAL. Scharf also stipulated the provision of two additional rooms 'loftier in height', for the display of large group portraits, as well as 'the choicest works of art & sculpture'.

<sup>538</sup> Whitehead, 'Architectures of Display at the National Gallery', p.195. This included Edmund Oldfield's 'skeletal' plan for the National Gallery and Austen Henry Layard's design for the National Gallery comprising corridor-like structures.

<sup>539</sup> Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain*, p.38; see also Whitehead, *Museums and the Construction of Disciplines*, pp.26–7.

<sup>540</sup> See George Scharf, 'Requirements for a National Portrait Gallery' (draft notes), 24 May 1889, NPG66/4/1/2, HAL. Photographs of the South Kensington hang from 1885 (NPG22/2/1, HAL) show that efforts were made to block out the lower portion of the ground-floor windows, in an attempt to minimize this effect.

of pictures according to artistic quality; the 'best' works were to be displayed on the top floor in the most favourable conditions, those classed as 'inferior' at ground level, in questionable light. Chronological order was to be observed, yet each floor was to have its 'own independent chronological sequence'.<sup>541</sup>

The significance of Scharf's late proposal is twofold: it demonstrates his continued willingness to experiment with the organization of the collection and is testament to the fact that to the last, the physical limitations of the Gallery's spaces conditioned the nature of his curatorial practice to this end. All the more remarkable is the fact that Scharf developed his scheme at a comparatively early date, the concept of the 'dual arrangement' not being formally codified before the curatorial interventions of Benjamin Gilman at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts in the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>542</sup> Lara Perry has furthermore considered this design in relation to an aesthetic recalibration of the collection, prompted by an enhanced number of artists and art patrons appointed to the Board from the 1880s. According to Perry, these active Trustees of the later nineteenth-century NPG were especially inclined 'to cater to the discerning eyes of the Royal Academy students and patrons of the National Gallery under whose purview the national portraits would soon be placed'.<sup>543</sup> Although it is not possible to ascertain the extent of their influence upon Scharf in this particular instance, the survival of Frederic Leighton's amendment to the text of the printed proposal circulated amongst the Trustees, suggests his close involvement with the scheme.<sup>544</sup> Sadly, both Scharf and Leighton died before the physical transfer of the collection to its long-awaited permanent home in 1896.<sup>545</sup> In the event the Board reverted to strict chronology throughout, underlining the Gallery's primary and enduring function as an 'historical collection'.<sup>546</sup> Despite this, Scharf figured prominently in the conception of the gallery building

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<sup>541</sup> George Scharf, printed memo, 25 Feb. 1895, NPG66/4/1/2, HAL. Scharf retired in March of that year.

<sup>542</sup> Gilman's model similarly dictated that the collection's 'best' original works were to be displayed on the upper floor under optimal conditions of light and space, whilst objects of lesser aesthetic worth were to be housed on the ground floor; see McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao*, p.126.

<sup>543</sup> Perry, *Facing Femininities*, p.69; see also Perry, 'The National Portrait Gallery and its constituencies, 1858–96', pp.152–3.

<sup>544</sup> George Scharf, 21 Jan. 1895, inscr. 'Frederick[sic] Leighton's Amendment'; NPG66/4/1/2, HAL.

<sup>545</sup> As did the second Chairman, Charles Stewart Hardinge (1822–94). Scharf died at Ashley Place on 19 April 1895. The NPG at St Martin's Place first opened to the public on 4 April 1896.

<sup>546</sup> Lionel Cust, 12 Sep. 1895, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1895*, p.12, HAL.

at St Martin's Place, Ewan Christian continuing to seek his advice right up to his death.<sup>547</sup> In a note accompanying his initial report for the architect, Scharf justifies both the inclusion of his guidelines and his own authority on the subject: 'I only jot them down as they occur to me; but they *have long occupied my thoughts*...they are the result of more than 30 years' experience during which period I have been occupied in collecting & displaying the Portraits now about to be so appropriately & honourably housed'.<sup>548</sup>

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<sup>547</sup> In one of his last letters to Christian, Scharf thus concludes his suggestions for wall colour in the Gallery: 'Our arrangement of the pictures may require shifting and changing, as the pictures must be hung chronologically, the colour of the wall cannot guide us'; George Scharf to Ewan Christian (extract), 12 Feb. 1895, NPG66/4/1/2, HAL. The architect himself died on 21 February 1895; the project was completed by his son. Scharf's influence can also be seen in the fabric of the Gallery building. He designed the heraldic lunette over the front door (see George Scharf, personal diary, 9 Apr. 1893, NPG7/3/1/50, HAL), chose the subjects to be represented in the roundels on the exterior (see *Magazine of Art*, Jan. 1895, pp.429–31) and even created the interlinking NPG logo identifiable throughout (see NPG66/4/1/2, for detail of logo design).

<sup>548</sup> George Scharf to Ewan Christian, 25 May 1889, NPG66/4/1/2, HAL, emphasis mine.

## Chapter 5

### Scharf and the national portraits II (display and interpretation)

Chapter 4 considered George Scharf's approach towards the physical organization of the collection, investigating how he endeavoured to illustrate the progression of British history from the Plantagenet sovereigns to the celebrities of his day, through the chronological arrangement of the portraits and the careful articulation of gallery space. In this chapter I look closely at Scharf's attempts to maximize the educational potential of the collection by experimenting with aspects of display and interpretation including: the grouping together of related sitters to visually map out historical allegiances or connected biographies, the contextualization of pictorial likeness through adjacent display of alternative images of a sitter, and efforts to create a sympathetic physical environment for the presentation of authentic portraits. Yet portraits by themselves could not teach historical lessons.<sup>549</sup> This was contingent upon the simultaneous provision of information about their subjects, by means of accompanying picture labels, key-plates for group portraits and collection catalogues for use in the galleries. Whilst examining Scharf's development of an expanded biographical and descriptive catalogue for the NPG, I argue for his participation in a shift towards the application of more rigorous and scholarly standards of cataloguing, pioneered by museum professionals during the period. I furthermore contend that outside the necessary transmission of dates, facts and descriptions, Scharf's scheme to display autograph and handwriting specimens alongside associated likenesses in the gallery is testament to his concern with encouraging an intuitive, as well as intellectual, response to collection portraits. I reason that this material was intended to complement the painted image, further elucidating aspects of the sitter's personality and conveying to the visitor something of the essence of his or her character.

#### 5.1 Experiments with interpretative display

In the course of 1882 George Scharf oversaw alterations to the National Portrait Gallery's upper long gallery at South Kensington, whereby skylights were inserted and the side windows covered over. An article in *The Times* on the Gallery's renovation, based on notes

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<sup>549</sup> Paul Barlow acknowledges this difficulty and considers the inability of portraits to function as objects which stand for a 'fully articulated reconstruction of the past'; see Barlow, 'The Imagined Hero as Incarnate Sign', p.532.

submitted by Scharf to the author, reveals his strategy. The ceiling was raised and sloping windows fitted in the roof 'at an angle sufficiently well calculated to diffuse light, at the same time to concentrate it especially on the walls where the pictures hang'.<sup>550</sup> Whilst significantly improving the lighting conditions, these measures also considerably increased the available wall space (see fig. 58). Portraits donated by the Society of Serjeants at Law (1877) and the British Museum (1879) - previously hung separately in the 'High Room' - were incorporated into the general collection.<sup>551</sup> At this point Scharf was also able to think further about the deliberate grouping together of particular pictures within the sequence. The same article describes his efforts to this effect:

Under the present arrangement, the persons distinguished for their relative affections or sympathies, are curiously, *and not without meaning*, brought together. [Thomas] Wolsey is placed between Catherine of Arragon [sic] and Anne Boleyn, while Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, the avowed enemy of the latter, hangs very near her. [Thomas] Cranmer and [Reginald] Pole are side by side.<sup>552</sup>

This clustering of interconnected sitters continued throughout the collection's chronological progression, as evidenced in photographs of the South Kensington hang taken by Praetorius and Wood & Co. in 1885. An image of the north wall of the second compartment in the upper gallery, for example, includes pictures that formed part of Scharf's 'Stuart series' (see fig. 59). The portrait of James I by Daniel Mytens in an ornate carved frame [NPG 109] can be seen positioned centrally, surrounded by members of his family [NPG 71, 127 & 407] and flanked by significant figures of his court, including statesman Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury [NPG 107] and diplomat Dudley Carleton, Viscount Dorchester [NPG 110].<sup>553</sup> Likewise, the author of *The Times* article confirms the continuation of this visual mapping amongst the more modern pictures on the ground floor, remarking that at the western edge of the gallery could be found 'a nest of literary celebrities and freethinking divines, ruled over by George II and patronized by Queen Charlotte'.<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>550</sup> Anon., 'The National Portrait Gallery', *The Times*, 11 Dec. 1882, p.8. See George Scharf, personal diary, 11 Dec. 1882: 'A good article in the Times on the changes in the Gallery; following my MS more than expected'; NPG7/3/1/39, HAL. The practice of lighting pictures from above was generally accepted as the best means of illumination from the eighteenth-century onwards; see Klonk, 'Mounting Vision', p.340.

<sup>551</sup> See George Scharf, undated note, NPG7/1/1/3/1, HAL. After 1882 this large upper room at the western extremity of the Gallery was reserved for the display of the large group portraits: NPG 54, NPG 599 and NPG 342.

<sup>552</sup> Anon., 'The National Portrait Gallery', *The Times*, 11 Dec. 1882, p.8, emphasis mine.

<sup>553</sup> See also George Scharf's 'Wall Map List', 15 Aug. 1885, Part I, NPG66/2/2/6, HAL (fig. 56).

<sup>554</sup> Anon., 'The National Portrait Gallery', *The Times*, 11 Dec. 1882, p.8, emphasis mine.

Scharf had long-recognized the interpretative potential of this conscious orchestration, having taken an interest in Peter Cunningham's arrangement of the Portrait Gallery at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857 (see Chapter 4). In her book on the exhibition, Elizabeth Pergam notes Scharf's close attention to Cunningham's 'resuscitative formulation'<sup>555</sup> as shown by the former's sketches of the hang, which acknowledge this early attempt to both group the portraits chronologically and specifically to 'bring friends together on one wall who have long ceased to sit together in the flesh in the same room'.<sup>556</sup> Upon the removal of the National Portrait Gallery's collection from Great George Street in 1870, Scharf was able to experiment similarly with a potent juxtaposition of sitters in the relatively more spacious apartments at South Kensington. Marcia Pointon makes use of one of Scharf's 1871 sketches of a screen of Elizabethan portraits in the upper gallery, to analyze his decisions about the hang.<sup>557</sup> She identifies clear echoes of themes common to an emerging nineteenth-century historical consciousness, realized via the publication of new histories of the national past to satisfy an increased reading public, a proliferation of literary fiction based on historical themes, and the dominance of British history painting as a genre favoured by Victorian visual artists.<sup>558</sup> Pointon argues that Scharf's arrangement must have read like a 'visual accompaniment' to the seventh volume of Anthony Froude's successful *History of England* covering the reign of Elizabeth I, which had been published in 1870:

Elizabeth is hung with the Marquis of Winchester (High Treasurer of Elizabeth's first Parliament) on one side and her favourite, Leicester, on the other. Raleigh who, it has been suggested, embodied Victorian admiration for Elizabethan imperialism, and who was already printed indelibly on the popular consciousness from [John Everett] Millais's *The Boyhood of Raleigh*, hangs immediately beneath.<sup>559</sup>

She further notes Scharf's positioning of the electrotype bust of Mary, Queen of Scots after her effigy in Westminster Abbey [NPG 307], on a pedestal directly below Nicholas Hilliard's celebrated miniature of Elizabeth [NPG 108], through which he reinforces the fashionable pairing of the two figures and reflects a contemporary fascination with the entwined narratives of these female monarchs.

<sup>555</sup> Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, p.79.

<sup>556</sup> Peter Cunningham, 'British Portrait Gallery', *Catalogue of the Art Treasures of the United Kingdom*, (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1857), p.109, as quoted in Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, p.79.

<sup>557</sup> See George Scharf, sketch of the east side of the first screen in the Long Gallery, South Kensington, 14 Sep. 1871, NPG66/2/2/3, HAL (fig. 49); see also Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p.243.

<sup>558</sup> See Mitchell, *Picturing the Past*; and Roy C. Strong, *And When Did You Last See Your Father?*.

<sup>559</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p.243.

Pointon also uses the 1871 sketches of the hang to draw attention to Scharf's practice of displaying together multiple portraits of a single sitter. She identifies the Chandos portrait of William Shakespeare [NPG 1] in position adjacent to an impression of the engraving by Martin Droeshout [NPG 185], and in close proximity to a plaster cast of the head from his monument in Stratford-upon-Avon [NPG 185a].<sup>560</sup> Whilst it was a general rule of the Trustees to refuse offers of portraits if a good likeness of the subject already existed in the collection (excluding items for the reference portfolios), alternative images of particularly important sitters were on occasion actively acquired. This was the case for Shakespeare, the personification of national greatness, whose painted portrait figured symbolically as the NPG's first acquisition and first donation.<sup>561</sup> April 1864 saw the tercentenary of the dramatist and poet's birth, with a whole week of celebratory events organized in London, Stratford and other British cities. Scharf successfully petitioned the Trustees to open the Gallery to the public for each day of the festivities 'in order to afford all possibility for examining' the renowned picture, indeed the only known likeness with sound claim to authenticity.<sup>562</sup> He had, in fact, implemented his comparative display technique by the mid-1860s; a drawing of the Front Room at Great George Street dated March 1865 clearly shows the Chandos portrait on an easel to the left of the marble fireplace, with the cast and engraving hanging nearby above the mantelpiece (fig. 60). This pre-dates the South Kensington arrangement by six years. The plaster had been deposited at the Gallery by the antiquary Albert Way in 1859,<sup>563</sup> although it was not officially accessioned into the collection until Way's death in 1874. The collecting of sculpture did not formally commence until 1861, when a bust of the poet Thomas Moore was purchased by the Trustees in February of that year [NPG 117]. Furthermore it remained common, if not official, policy not to display plaster casts in the public gallery.<sup>564</sup> Therefore, the Shakespeare cast seems to have been employed at this early stage as contextualizing material for the painted likeness (see figs. 61 & 61a). This was similarly the case with a plaster cast taken from the effigy of Mary, Queen of Scots [NPG 307a or b], accessioned into the

<sup>560</sup> See Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p.242. See also George Scharf, sketch of the west side of the first screen in the Long Gallery, South Kensington, 14 Sep. 1871, NPG66/2/2/3, HAL.

<sup>561</sup> See Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p.242.

<sup>562</sup> Printed 'Notice', 1864, detailing extended opening times during the 'Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration Week', copy NPG7/1/1/3/2, HAL; see also George Scharf to William Smith, 8 Apr. 1864 (NPG20/3, HAL).

<sup>563</sup> See George Scharf, personal diary, 15 Feb. 1859, NPG7/3/1/16, HAL.

<sup>564</sup> See George Scharf to Theodore Martin, 14 Jun. 1884; papers relating to the 172<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 12 Jul. 1884, uncatalogued material, HAL.

collection in 1870, but physically at the Gallery by at least the beginning of 1860. A letter from Lord Stanhope to Scharf following its arrival, indicates the intended function of both: 'The cast of the Queen Mary from Westminster ought I think to be framed & if possible hung side by side with the portrait [NPG 96], as we have done in the case of Shakespeare'.<sup>565</sup>

Unfortunately, the Droeshout engraving was not secured in time for the tercentenary week, but was purchased in July 1864. Scharf took the unusual step of having it mounted with a facsimile of the verse by Ben Johnson, with which it had originally appeared as the frontispiece to the folio editions of Shakespeare's plays:<sup>566</sup>

This Figure, that thou here seest put,  
It was for Gentle Shakespeare cut;  
Wherin the Grauer had a strife  
With Nature, to out-doo the life:  
O, could he have but drawne his wit  
As well in brass, as he hath hit  
His face; the Print would then surpass  
All, that was ever writ in brasse...

In so doing he - perhaps deliberately - raised a question concerning the capacity and the limitations of pictorial likeness, in thus offering this engraved portrait as a representation of the Bard himself. Scharf was interested in the effect of the material upon viewers in the gallery space. In his diary for 1876, for example, he eagerly records the reaction of eminent visitor Thomas Carlyle, who came to view the portraits at South Kensington with Anthony Froude and Lady Verney: 'Mr Carlyle read aloud the B.J. lines under the engraved portrait of Shakespeare with much effect, geniality & an expression of chuckling good humour at the end'.<sup>567</sup>

The layout of the galleries at South Kensington, connected yet compartmentalized into separate bays with the use of dividing screens, where portraits belonging to a particular period were grouped, provided further opportunity for experimentation. Following the 1879 renovation Scharf decided to have the walls of the 'Tudor Room' painted white and green, 'the distinguishing colours of the House of Tudor', in contrast to the standard maroon used

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<sup>565</sup> Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 27 Feb. 1860 (NPG7/1/1/4/1/5, HAL).

<sup>566</sup> Scharf sent the engraving expressly to George Reid in the print room of the British Museum to have it cleaned, mounted and the verse copied: see George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 1 Sep. & 27 Oct. 1864 (NPG7/1/1/1/1, HAL). The Gallery's impression is now no longer mounted with the verse, though Scharf's sketches of the hang in 1865 and 1871 indicate its earlier presence on the mount below the image.

<sup>567</sup> George Scharf, personal diary, 11 Apr. 1876, NPG7/3/1/33, HAL.



elsewhere in the gallery.<sup>568</sup> Giles Waterfield cites this as testament to Scharf's interest in evoking an appropriate setting for the appreciation of this discrete set of authentic likenesses.<sup>569</sup> Discourse surrounding the potential for displaying museum objects within sympathetic or historicizing environments, was still current. Christopher Whitehead maintains that at mid-century, museum interiors 'formed something of a continuity with the architecture of the private collection in consisting of reference to the historical past through interior decoration'.<sup>570</sup> Amid concerns that the display of art works divorced from the context in which they were conceived significantly lessened their potency or meaning, attempts were made to recreate at least a semblance of their primary setting inside the gallery space. Scharf had himself been part of a programme that carried such ideas to their most radical conclusion when he assisted Owen Jones with the arrangement of the Greek & Roman Courts at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham, in 1854. A comprehensive cast collection of classical and modern sculpture was organized within a sequence of ten architectural courts corresponding with the age of the original art works, and designed to illustrate the complete history of civilization. Jan Piggott describes in detail the creation of these spaces; the architects seeking to faithfully reconstruct scaled-down versions of actual buildings or create a composite of representative elements.<sup>571</sup> As a result, the exhibits were provided with a close approximation of the conditions in which they were initially comprehended.

In his examination of attitudes towards the redemptive potential of display in the nineteenth-century exhibition arena, Michael Hatt argues that the interiors at Sydenham 'gestured imaginatively towards the historical contexts and worlds its sculptures had originally occupied (or, at least, the objects from which the casts had been taken)'.<sup>572</sup> Scharf wrote the handbook to both courts and, in his introduction to the architecture of the Greek, he describes the effect of this elaborate reconstruction:

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<sup>568</sup> See George Scharf's report to the Trustees, minutes of the 147<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 10 May 1879, NPG 1/3, p.162, HAL. In keeping with other European picture galleries during the period, the Trustees generally favoured a 'rich red colour' for the walls; see minutes of the 41<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 14 Jul. 1860 (NPG 1/1, p 131, HAL).

<sup>569</sup> See Waterfield *Palaces of Art*, p. 111.

<sup>570</sup> Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain*, p.38. For a detailed analysis of interior decoration and historicism in the nineteenth-century art museum, see pp. 38–58.

<sup>571</sup> Jan Piggott, *Palace of the People: The Crystal Palace at Sydenham, 1854–1936* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), pp.67–95. On the Crystal Palace at Sydenham see also Kate Nichols and Sarah Victoria Turner, *After 1851: The Material and Visual Cultures of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham* (Manchester: MUP, 2017).

<sup>572</sup> See Michael Hatt, 'In Search of Lost Time: Greek Sculpture and Display in Late Nineteenth-Century England', *Art History* 36, no. 4 (Sep. 2013), p.774.

It is square, and being surrounded by porticoes, resembles a Greek *agora*, or place of public assembly, the *forum* or market-place of the Romans. The same order of architecture is continued, and the names between the wreaths on the frieze are those of poets, philosophers, artists and a few of the chief patrons.<sup>573</sup>

Highly controversial, yet central to the success of this space was Jones's reinstating of primary colours to ornament the architectural elements and the bas-reliefs fixed to the walls. Opinions surrounding sculptural and architectural polychromy remained sharply divided. Although archaeological evidence for the ancient use of colour to decorate statuary and buildings was generally accepted, its use in contemporary revivalist contexts was initially rejected by nineteenth-century aesthetes, more used to worshipping the whitewashed purity of the Elgin Marbles and other classical remains.<sup>574</sup> Ian Jenkins observes, however, that to mid-Victorian taste, the naked simplicity of ancient architecture began to appear less acceptable than it had done at the height of the Greek Revival. Therefore by 1850, the British Museum's architect Sydney Smirke was able to implement an internal decorative system, which accurately replicated the colouring of a Greek temple. After the middle of the century, the walls of the sculpture galleries were 'almost uniformly red and green, and the ceilings variously ornamented'.<sup>575</sup> The inadequacies of resources available to the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, and the limitations of its exhibition space, ensured that Scharf could not attempt anything so ambitious in the galleries at South Kensington. Yet, in being guided in his colour scheme by historical reference over the selection of a shade that might best complement the tonal variations of the pictures, Scharf made a notable contribution to this discourse. Although not aiming at a reanimation of the original display environment, he nonetheless endeavours to metaphorically locate the portraits in time and thus aid the viewer's interpretation of these historically specific images. The 'Tudor Room' remained Scharf's single experiment in this direction however; the dark red generally employed throughout accorded with wider art museum practice during the period.<sup>576</sup>

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<sup>573</sup> George Scharf, *The Greek Court erected in the Crystal Palace* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1854), p.4.

<sup>574</sup> See Piggott, *Palace of the People*, pp.75–8; and Michael Hatt, 'Transparent Forms: Tinting, Whiteness and John Gibson's Venus', *Sculpture Journal* 23, no. 2 (Jan. 1, 2014), pp.185–86. Hatt also confirms Scharf's active participation in this discussion, listing his published essays on polychrome sculpture of 1851 and 1860; see 'Transparent Forms', p.190, nt. 17.

<sup>575</sup> Jenkins, *Archaeologists & Aesthetes*, p.45.

<sup>576</sup> See Waterfield, *Palaces of Art*, pp.58–59; and Klonk, *Spaces of Experience*, pp. 31–36.

## 5.2 Gallery labels and collection catalogues

In his 1998 essay, *Pedagogic Objects, Clean Eyes and Popular Instruction*, Tony Bennett argues for the privileging of sight in the sensory regime of the nineteenth-century museum, and its distinctive organization of 'relations of vision and pedagogy'.<sup>577</sup> Bennett considers the dominance of contemporary debates surrounding the relationship between labels and exhibits and their role in 'directing vision'. He maintains that in transforming the museum artefact into pedagogic object, museum professionals sought to 'cleanse the eyes of the public so that, in absorbing the lessons of those objects, they might be effectively instructed in the meaning of history'.<sup>578</sup> This idea is overtly pertinent to the function of the early NPG; its success in articulating a narrative of the national past depended upon the provision of visual aids in the Gallery, to help identify sitters and indicate their significance within that history.<sup>579</sup> Certainly, throughout Scharf's tenure, the development of textual material to accompany the display of portraits within the exhibition space remained a principal concern. In its most basic form this comprised the inclusion of picture labels or 'tablets' fixed to individual frames, containing the name and dates of the sitter, as well as the artist's details. Scharf's thoughts concerning the necessity of relaying essential information to the public were likely galvanised during his early curatorial experiences. None of the sculpture at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham was labelled upon its opening in 1854, for example; emphasis was instead placed upon 'visual education' through a direct appeal to the senses. This omission was quietly rectified within a month, however, in response to the perceived failure of the educational scheme.<sup>580</sup> In his 1858 speech to the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Scharf expressed frustration with the organizers of the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition, primarily concerning their decision not to supply any such instruction to elucidate the art works. For those visitors who had neither the funds nor perhaps the inclination to purchase the official catalogue, the general reaction to the paintings in the fine art saloons was one of bewilderment:

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<sup>577</sup> Tony Bennett, 'Pedagogic Objects, Clean Eyes, and Popular Instruction: On Sensory Regimes and Museum Didactics', *Configurations*, 6, no. 3 (Sep. 1, 1998), p.2.

<sup>578</sup> Bennett, 'Pedagogic Objects', p.2.

<sup>579</sup> Whereas the inclusion of labels in the art museum was a hotly contested topic during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao*, p.107), their necessity for interpreting the National Portrait Gallery's collection was not questioned.

<sup>580</sup> See Kate Nichols, *Greece and Rome at the Crystal Palace, 1854–1936* (PhD thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, 2009), pp.75–6. See also Kate Nichols, *Greece and Rome at the Crystal Palace: Classical Sculpture and Modern Britain, 1854–1936* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), p.37.

Had the *educational* information been at the same time afforded to these helpless children and factory people, a more direct benefit might have resulted...The portrait gallery, although greatly exceeding the hope and expectations which were entertained of its importance at the beginning, was totally lost upon the mass of visitors for want of labels to indicate the names at least of the persons represented.<sup>581</sup>

Victoria Whitfield agrees that the Portrait Gallery at the 1857 exhibition was especially undermined by this absence, reflecting that the lack of information effectively rendered it redundant: 'As signifiers of national history, the portraits could fulfil their intended function only if the multitude of visitors were able to recognise the 'great men' on display; without labels the requisite legibility was lost and the necessary resurrection of the dead for the edification of the living failed'.<sup>582</sup> Scharf would have also registered this particular failure, and it undoubtedly informed his approach to the national collection.

The practice of label writing began when the NPG opened to the public in 1859,<sup>583</sup> the rate of execution increasing with the expansion of the collection. These tablets were initially made of wood, but were later replaced by gilded metal covered with glass.<sup>584</sup> As a number of large group portraits were added to the collection, Scharf experimented with similarly identifying sitters by means of specially constructed key-plates for display alongside the pictures in the gallery. In 1872 he spent time devising a scaled-down key to John Partridge's *The Fine Arts Commissioners, 1846* [NPG 342], donated by the artist earlier that year.<sup>585</sup> Scharf exercised his considerable skill as a draughtsman in accurately translating the central details of this multi-figure composition in reduced size, and carefully transcribing the names under each

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<sup>581</sup> George Scharf, 'On the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857', p.314, original emphasis.

<sup>582</sup> Whitfield, 'The illustrious or infamous dead', p.51.

<sup>583</sup> Prior to this pictures could be identified by means of a system of 'movable numbers' devised by Scharf. These referred to entries in a manuscript catalogue available for consultation in the rooms at Great George Street; see Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 8 Dec. 1857, NPG7/1/1/4/1/2, HAL.

<sup>584</sup> Ongoing expenditure on tablets was diligently recorded by Scharf. Between October 1876 and May 1878, for instance, £163.18s.5d was spent on this activity alone; see minutes of the 143<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 18 May 1878 (NPG 1/3, pp.118–19, HAL).

<sup>585</sup> See minutes of the 115<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 13 Mar. 1872, NPG 1/2, p.213, HAL; see also George Scharf, personal diary, 14 Jun. 1872: 'To Mr Partridge & to show him my key-plate which he praised highly' (NPG7/3/1/29, HAL).

portrait vignette (fig. 62).<sup>586</sup> He also executed a key-plate to aid the interpretation of Sir George Hayter's complex image, *The House of Commons, 1833* (fig. 63). The Government had donated this picture to the Gallery in 1858, but due to the critical shortage of space at Great George Street, it had remained in the Committee Room of the Houses of Parliament until being united with the rest of the collection when the NPG moved to South Kensington in 1870. Early in 1871 Scharf gifted a large lithographed key to the portrait in two parts, which he had sketched from the original, to the collection of prints and drawings at the British Museum.<sup>587</sup> In his accompanying letter to the Keeper George Reid, he explains that in later states the writing next to each figure was removed for substitution with clearer numbers in red that corresponded with a list of sitter names.<sup>588</sup> Evidence that a version of this and the list of names were displayed next to the painting in the gallery, is provided by Scharf's account of the Easter opening in 1871:

The great picture of the House of Commons proved a source of very great attraction, and it was interesting to see how diligently these casual visitors sought out the great political characters of the day, and how delighted they were when they found that their surmises were confirmed by the key-plates.<sup>589</sup>

As the production of labels became commonplace, Scharf sought to make their contents more explanatory in character by including extended biographical details for the sitter and thus affording 'a readier means of information to those who have but little time at their disposal'.<sup>590</sup> His justification echoes Gustav Waagen's recommendation to the 1853 government Select Committee concerning the National Gallery, that the 'ready (though limited) information [provided by the museum label] is important to those whose time is much

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<sup>586</sup> This was fortuitous timing, as the condition of the portrait began to deteriorate soon after acquisition due to the artist's use of bitumen. In 1883 Scharf commissioned a photograph of the painting whilst 'anything of the surface remained distinguishable' (see nt. 91), yet this key remains the clearest indication of the details of the finished composition; see minutes of the 168<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 20 Nov. 1883, NPG 1/4, p.61, HAL.

<sup>587</sup> See George Scharf, *Key to the principal figures in George Hayter's painting of the House of Commons in 1833*, lithograph, 1870, 1871,0211.147 & 1871,0211.147.2, P&D, BM. For a photograph after this impression, see RP NPG 54, HAL.

<sup>588</sup> George Scharf to George William Reid, 9 Feb. 1871, Departmental Letter Book, 1870–2, P&D, BM. For a copy of this alphabetical large-format (printed) list, see RP 54, HAL.

<sup>589</sup> George Scharf, 9 May 1871, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1871*, p.3, HAL. For a full transcript of Scharf's expanded draft report of the 1871 Easter opening, see Appendix V.

<sup>590</sup> See George Scharf on the 'experiment of extended biographical notices'; 12 Apr. 1866, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1866*, p.3, HAL. See also George Scharf, 'Writings for Metal Tablets' (draft, undated), uncatalogued material relating to the display of the collection, HAL.

absorbed by mental and bodily labour...<sup>591</sup> Correspondence between the first Chairman of Trustees and the Secretary reveals that Stanhope was not in favour of this emphasis, remaining reluctant to allow anything to be added to the tablets beyond names and dates, and insisting '[a]ny attempt to turn them into biographies or descriptive Catalogues would not in the long run, be satisfactory'.<sup>592</sup> However, in this instance Scharf's influence prevailed, as demonstrated by the somewhat triumphant tone of his 1868 report on the Gallery's Easter opening:

The inscriptions on the frames and pedestals, affording names and dates, together with a few distinguishing facts concerning the persons represented, were read with avidity, and the demeanour of those visitors who went carefully through the collection, clearly proved the truth of the observation, that objects of art connected with history become more and more interesting in proportion to the amount of knowledge brought to bear upon them.<sup>593</sup>

Hardinge, in his capacity as second Chairman, was more in line with Scharf's thinking on this issue, lending his support for increasing the number of labels containing short accounts of the sitter in characteristically abrupt fashion: 'I have long felt that the "οἱ πολλοί" ought to know something about each "worthy" whose visage they contemplate. And the object of the gallery being not only to "interest" but to "instruct"'.<sup>594</sup> By the 1880s the manufacture of 'elaborately-written' tablets to accompany portraits on display had increased to a rate of about 50 a year. One contemporary reviewer describes their effect:

This excellent practice has proved of the greatest advantage. The visitor can now learn, without referring to the catalogue, what it is most necessary to know. An attentive walk through the Gallery is a useful lesson, easily and pleasantly learnt, in the history of England in its various branches.<sup>595</sup>

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<sup>591</sup> Report of the Select Committee, 1853, as quoted in Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain*, p.25. Waagen had implemented a detailed system of labelling for the galleries at Berlin.

<sup>592</sup> Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 12 Nov. 1866, NPG7/1/1/4/1/9, HAL. One of his objections was that 'with the extreme conciseness which this attempt implies, it is difficult to be quite exact'. Stanhope maintained his preference for brevity when it came to interpretation in the gallery. In response to the section of Scharf's draft report on the 1871 Easter opening, in which he notes the visitors' positive response to the information provided via written labels, Stanhope adds in his own hand: 'as distinguished from elaborate catalogue'. For a full transcript of this document, see Appendix V.

<sup>593</sup> George Scharf, 30 Apr. 1868, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1868*, p.3, HAL. On the somewhat problematic nature of Scharf's mediated reports of visitor reactions, see Chapter 4.

<sup>594</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, n.d. but Apr. 1876, NPG7/1/1/4/1/13, HAL.

<sup>595</sup> Anon., 'The National Portrait Gallery', *Quarterly Review*, Apr. 1888, p.358.

After the opening of the Manchester exhibition in 1857, Scharf had offered to compile labels for the Old Master paintings free of charge. The executive committee promptly rejected this suggestion, 'mainly, it appeared, on the grounds that it might interfere with the sale of the catalogues'.<sup>596</sup> Scharf was quick to point out what was, in his opinion, a false economy:

I am naturally anxious to record what I would have done, and to express the hope that in any future undertaking of a similar magnitude and importance, the system of *labelling for the multitude* may be carried into effect. Both in the National Gallery and in the British Museum that system works admirably. It has been proved in those establishments that a ready display of the leading names, both of artist and subject, serves only to excite a desire for further information, and that in consequence a greater number of catalogues have been sold.<sup>597</sup>

It is this 'desire for further information' that Scharf intended the collection catalogue to satisfy. Whilst picture labels could provide immediate access to objects on display, the catalogue could offer supplementary instruction, to be referred to in the gallery and utilized on future occasions. This partnership between the two forms of interpretation had been advocated as early as 1836, when Gustav Waagen and fellow museum authority Leo von Klenze gave evidence before the Select Committee investigating the management of British art institutions. Christopher Whitehead confirms that the picture label and collection catalogue subsequently evolved in tandem in the national museums, into the mid-late 1850s.<sup>598</sup>

An investigation into the changing template of the National Portrait Gallery catalogue throughout Scharf's career reveals his attempt to exploit the potential of this more expansive format. The first edition was published in 1858 and featured one portrait per page, containing a short sitter biography, artist and acquisition information, and details of known engravings

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<sup>596</sup> George Scharf, 'On the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857', p.316. The official exhibition catalogue was compiled by organizers of the exhibition's different sections. A range of popular instruction was also available, catering for the wide variety of visitors to Old Trafford. For an analysis of official and non-official texts, see Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, pp.97–127.

<sup>597</sup> George Scharf, 'On the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857', p.316, original emphasis. See also Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, p. 96. It is not known whether Scharf's claim about the increased sales of catalogues at the National Gallery and British Museum is accurate, and there is little evidence to suggest the labels contributed to catalogue sales at the NPG. In fact, despite their general success, Scharf had to admit his expanded biographical tablets tended 'in some measure to diminish the sale of printed catalogues in the rooms'; George Scharf, 12 Apr. 1866, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1866*, p.3, HAL.

<sup>598</sup> See Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain*, p.153. A system of labelling was first implemented at the National Gallery in 1856; see Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation*, p.173.

after the picture.<sup>599</sup> The entries, ordered by location in Great George Street, formed an extended version of what Giles Waterfield has termed the 'inventory-catalogue', one of three principal types of art catalogue to emerge from the end of the eighteenth century. These were devised for use in the gallery, providing essential facts to be consumed by the visitor as he or she moved from room to room.<sup>600</sup> On sale for one shilling, the first printed catalogue was a joint effort between the Secretary and the Trustees, Stanhope in particular compiling many of the biographies for this purpose. Annotated drafts of the catalogue pages illustrate the control he maintained over the project. Where, for example, Scharf provides an explanation for the battle scene included in the background of a portrait of James Stanhope, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Stanhope, the Chairman has crossed out this text in the entry so that just the central facts of his biography remain.<sup>601</sup> Indeed, Scharf's attempts to furnish entries with pictorial details are limited by Stanhope:

I am afraid that I shall not be able to retain as many as I could wish of your interesting notices upon [David] Wilkie's pictures. But I think that except where there is a great deal to be related respecting the portrait itself (as in the cases of the Raleigh & the Shakespeare) it is very desirable to confine the notices to one page each.<sup>602</sup>

As the collection grew additional supplements were published using this abbreviated structure, and its rapid expansion necessitated both the alphabetical arrangement of entries by sitter and an increase in price, to a shilling and six pence.<sup>603</sup> Gertrude Prescott Nuding argues that in the case of the early NPG catalogues 'the printed word was clearly intended to augment the visual' and notes the labour-intensive task of compiling biographical notices in

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<sup>599</sup> This replaced manuscript versions available for use by visitors, whilst printed handlists of the portraits distributed free of charge during the Easter, Whitsuntide and Christmas openings, remained popular (see also, Chapter 4).

<sup>600</sup> Giles Waterfield, 'The Origins of the Early Picture Gallery Catalogue in Europe, and Its Manifestations in Victorian Britain', in Susan M. Pearce ed., *Art In Museums*, (London: Athlone Press, 1995), pp. 44–5.

<sup>601</sup> See notes on the 1857 catalogue, NPG7/1/2/2/1, HAL. This relates not to NPG 6 but to another portrait of James Stanhope, presented in 1857 and substituted in 1870 for the current version. William Smith and William Hookham Carpenter also contributed notes towards entries in this first edition; see William Smith and William Hookham Carpenter to George Scharf, 1 & 8 Feb. 1858 (NPG7/1/1/4/2/1, HAL).

<sup>602</sup> Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 7 Aug. 1858, NPG7/1/1/4/1/4, HAL. On Stanhope's close supervision of Scharf's early work, see also Chapter 3.

<sup>603</sup> See Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 26 Feb. 1861, NPG7/1/2/2/2/4, HAL. In 1881 Scharf appealed to Gladstone that the 'prohibitive' price be reduced once more to a shilling, to increase the accessibility of the catalogue; see George Scharf to William Ewart Gladstone, 22 May 1881 (NPG7/1/2/2/4/6, HAL). The subsequent years at Bethnal Green saw a steady diminution in the sale of the shilling catalogues, however; see George Scharf to the Controller of the Stationary Office, 1 Mar. 1895, NPG7/1/2/2/6/1, HAL.



the days before the *Dictionary of National Biography*.<sup>604</sup> This is where the biographical reference volumes assembled by Scharf in his private library would have proved useful. In some instances, he bound together biographies of British sitters extracted from multiple sources.<sup>605</sup>

It was not until the late 1870s, following Stanhope's death in 1875, that Scharf had the opportunity to develop the nature of the material offered in the Gallery catalogue. Although his *Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts, & c. in the National Portrait Gallery* was not published until 1881, he presented proofs for its layout to the Trustees as early as 1877.<sup>606</sup> The new edition was to function as more of an 'expository guide', which Waterfield defines as offering wider commentary on collection objects. In addition to the provision of basic catalogue information, he suggests that an interest in 'explaining works of art in simple terms is to be found throughout the early history of galleries'.<sup>607</sup> This explanatory objective is most obviously reflected in Scharf's addition of detailed portrait descriptions for each work, inviting a close physical examination of the picture. The account of the portrait of mathematician Charles Babbage, for example, is typically inclusive yet concise: 'The face is turned nearly in full, the dark brown eyes looking away to the left. Sallow complexion, smooth cheeks, dark brown hair. Dressed in a brown coat, with a deep black stock round the neck; a small portion of plain white shirt seen at the neck. Light admitted from the right-hand side' (fig. 64).<sup>608</sup> Preserved in the archive is a fascinating booklet containing descriptive notes on pictures, for use in generating this type of standardized catalogue text. In a number of columns, Scharf has diligently collated information on the physical attributes of sitters in collection portraits under the headings: 'Eyeballs / Eyebrows / Hair / Complexn. / Lips /

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<sup>604</sup> Gertrude Prescott Nuding, 'Britishness and Portraiture', in Roy Porter ed., *Myths of the English* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), p. 257.

<sup>605</sup> See, for example, 'Biographical Articles from Quarterly and Other Reviews' [annotated by George Scharf], SL, HAL.

<sup>606</sup> See minutes of the 137<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 9 Feb. 1877, NPG 1/3, p.77, HAL. This edition also includes an expanded introduction to the Gallery, with a list of autographs and engravings in the collection, at the back.

<sup>607</sup> Waterfield, 'The Origins of the Early Picture Gallery Catalogue in Europe', p. 46. The third type is the 'presentation volume', which combined engravings of the pictures with explanatory text. For a survey of nineteenth-century gallery guides see also: Catherine Flood, 'And Wot Does the Catalog Tell Me?': Some Social Meanings of Nineteenth-Century Catalogues and Gallery Guides', *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 5 (2007), pp.1–27.

<sup>608</sup> George Scharf, *Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts, & c. in the National Portrait Gallery, Exhibition Road, South Kensington* (London: HMSO, 1881), p.89.

Moustache / Beard or Whiskers / Light from'.<sup>609</sup> This exemplifies his systematic and methodical approach towards a project that would take four years to complete.

The 1881 catalogue closely resembles the format of the similarly named *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Pictures in the National Gallery; with biographical Notices of the Painters*, compiled by Ralph Nicholson Wornum and Sir Charles Eastlake, and first published in 1847. Whilst this volume is alphabetically arranged by artist, the NPG catalogue is organized according to sitter. In both, entries are headed up with substantial biographies on the artist/sitter and the list of paintings/portraits that follow consistently record dimensions, acquisition numbers, details of provenance and successive engravings. It appears clear that in this instance, as for many other professional procedures, Scharf chose to follow the lead of his National Gallery colleagues (see also, Chapter 2).<sup>610</sup> Susanna Avery-Quash and Julie Sheldon argue that the efforts of Eastlake and Wornum had indeed 'set a new standard for such publications', so distinct was it from the summary National Gallery catalogues that preceded it, and devoid of the 'slipshod scholarship' Eastlake had occasionally observed in other continental museum publications.<sup>611</sup> In contrast, the 1847 edition is governed by uniformity and scholarly rigour, including notes on the subject matter of the pictures and also indicating the position of each artist within an historical framework. The catalogue served as a benchmark for comparable productions, remaining the National Gallery's official publication until 1878, after which it was updated with an adapted version that largely retained its guiding principles.<sup>612</sup>

Halona Norton-Westbrook further observes that, inspired by the work of German art historian Franz Kugler and Waagen's *Catalogue of the Picture Collection of the Royal Museum in Berlin* (1841), 'Eastlake and Wornum's publication aimed to show how the gallery's paintings

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<sup>609</sup> See portrait descriptions for catalogues, 1879–94, NPG7/1/2/2/3/1, HAL. The booklet is dated March and April 1879, and was presumably compiled in aid of the 1881 catalogue.

<sup>610</sup> Scharf demonstrated a continuing awareness of other gallery models, advocating a scale for publications along the lines of the National Gallery's abridged catalogues, for example, whilst warning against the 'fanciful shape' of those issued by the Grafton and New Galleries; see George Scharf to the Controller of the Stationary Office, 1 Mar. 1895, NPG7/1/2/2/6/1, HAL.

<sup>611</sup> Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation*, p.171. Before his appointment as Keeper in 1854, Wornum was employed to officially oversee the production of a new catalogue, having brought the inadequacies of the previous version to the attention of the Trustees.

<sup>612</sup> See Anon., 'Obituaries: Ralph Nicholson Wornum', *Art Journal*, 1878, p.75; and Waterfield, 'The Origins of the Early Picture Gallery Catalogue in Europe', p.64.

could be seen as illustrative of the development of different schools and periods'.<sup>613</sup> This was achieved by way of a 'Tabular View of the Schools of Painting' at the front of the catalogue, with the names of artists listed underneath different schools according to the centuries in which they lived. Crucially, in the preface to the catalogue the authors express their desire that the work proves useful not only as a reference volume for visitors in the gallery, but operates as a comprehensive 'guide to the history of painting, as represented by examples in the collection'.<sup>614</sup> I maintain that Scharf likewise designed his 1881 catalogue to fulfil this dual purpose. His additional inclusion of artists' biographies, alphabetically arranged at the back of the new edition, is significant. Scharf had suggested the biographies as early as 1862, although Stanhope rejected the idea, arguing that they were superfluous to the National Portrait Gallery's remit.<sup>615</sup> Hardinge however, quite approved, considering them 'a very useful branch' of the catalogue (fig. 65).<sup>616</sup> Beyond the simple guide for use in situ, extended information on artists and sitters ensured the catalogue's continued utility as both a work of historical reference and a tool for the study of British portraiture.<sup>617</sup> Vital to its success in this regard, was the inclusion of individual portrait descriptions. Scharf underlines their importance in some written notes on the topic, insisting that without descriptions, a catalogue of historical portraits cannot be of permanent value:

Description not only appeals to the memory, in as much as reading the description of a particular picture persons are enabled to judge whether they possess duplicates or repetitions of it, but also to the imagination. It...not only recalls to those who have seen it a particular picture but *raises in the mind an image*.<sup>618</sup>

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<sup>613</sup> Norton-Westbrook, *Between The 'Collection Museum' and The University*, p.43.

<sup>614</sup> Ralph Wornum and Charles Eastlake, *Descriptive and historical catalogue of the pictures in the National Gallery: with biographical notices of the painters* (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1847), as quoted in Waterfield, 'The Origins of the Early Picture Gallery Catalogue in Europe', p.61.

<sup>615</sup> See Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 2 Mar. 1862, NPG7/1/1/4/1/7, HAL.

<sup>616</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf, 8 Dec. 1880, NPG7/1/1/4/1/16, HAL. Hardinge's reaction reflects an increasing concern with the artistic merit of the collection amongst Trustees in the later decades of the century; this is considered in Chapter 4.

<sup>617</sup> In 1895, Scharf suggested that an abridged version of the catalogue was necessary to accommodate the extensive collection. Interestingly, he also promoted the publication of an unabridged edition for general reference and use as 'more of a library book', continuing to recognize these two modes of consumption; see minutes of the 209<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 21 Mar. 1895, NPG 1/5, p.162, HAL.

<sup>618</sup> George Scharf, rough notes on the importance of portrait descriptions, 22 Feb. 1894, NPG7/1/2/2/8, HAL, emphasis mine. Scharf supported the only scheme for an illustrated catalogue proposed within his lifetime, although he could not enlist interest from publishers in this 'independent mercantile speculation' (see minutes of the 197<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 28 Nov. 1891, NPG 1/5, p.27, HAL).

Distinct from providing general information about the composition, Scharf's descriptive texts actually encourage the reader to conceive imaginatively the pictorial details of a portrait. Whereas the National Gallery relied on the paintings on the gallery walls to act as illustrations for corresponding catalogue entries, Scharf's publication could thus function remotely in absence of illustration and away from the pictures themselves.<sup>619</sup> A reviewer in *Notes & Queries* acknowledges the significance of his resource, and indicates its relevance outside of the gallery visit:

As a rule catalogues are dreary reading; but the visitor of the National Portrait Gallery is supplied, for one shilling, with *a handbook of English biography* which it is a pleasure to read. It is difficult to condense without being dry; but Mr. Scharf's lives are brief, full of matter, and yet eminently readable. He contrives to tell us just what we want to know about the artists as well as the subject of each portrait, and his biographies are as exhaustive as they are pleasantly written.<sup>620</sup>

### 5.3 The 'impress of the man': displaying autograph letters

In addition to the display of informative labels in the gallery space, from the 1870s the presentation of autograph letters and specimens of handwriting alongside collection portraits, figured with increasing importance.<sup>621</sup> Examples were displayed close to corresponding likenesses in the collection, either in long frames on the walls, in freestanding glass cases, or in cases affixed to individual frames.<sup>622</sup> A prominent example of this latter format included the case containing two letters between Lord Stanhope and the Prince Consort concerning the foundation of the Gallery. This was fixed to the frame of Winterhalter's replica portrait of

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<sup>619</sup> On the necessary 'symbiosis between text and display' in the conception of National Gallery's catalogue, see Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain*, pp.23–4.

<sup>620</sup> Anon., 'Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the National Portrait Gallery. By George Scharf, F.S.A', *Notes & Queries*, 25 Feb. 1882, p.160, emphasis mine. Further praise is recorded in *The Times*: 'The catalogue gives all the information that can be reasonably expected, and it gives it in a concise and accessible form' (Anon., *The Times*, 18 Dec. 1881, p.7). Scharf himself comments on this positive 'leading article' in the paper, sending a clipping of it to the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl Stanhope and claiming that it had already increased visitor numbers and enhanced sales of the catalogue (see George Scharf to Arthur Philip Stanhope, 29 Dec. 1881, U1950/C541/3, KHLC). The latest version of the NPG catalogue to be published in Scharf's lifetime was the 'Jubilee edition' of 1888, an expanded edition following this format.

<sup>621</sup> This new area of collecting was first officially recorded in the 1873 annual report. Amongst the first acquisitions were letters written by sitters in John Partridge's *The Fine Arts Commissioners, 1846* [NPG 342], donated by the artist shortly before his death in 1872; see George Scharf, 5 May 1873, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1873*, p.4, HAL.

<sup>622</sup> The limitations of the NPG's exhibition spaces remained a challenge. At South Kensington it was necessary to display much of this material on the lateral wall of the upper gallery, adjacent to the portrait screens. At Bethnal Green, whilst the cases of autographs were placed in the gallery, those in frames were hung on the basement level where space could be found.

Albert [NPG 237], with a bust of the Chairman [NPG 499] positioned on a pedestal nearby (see also, Chapter 4).<sup>623</sup> In February 1871 Scharf first submitted to the Board two long frames containing experimental autograph facsimiles and other supplementary material, including engravings and medals, 'to show the Trustees the value of such a collection'.<sup>624</sup> These were enthusiastically received by the Trustees, who considered Scharf's efforts 'the more praiseworthy, since on this occasion they were not in fulfilment of instructions, but entirely spontaneous and due to his own zeal'.<sup>625</sup> Writing to Scottish antiquary David Laing three months later, Scharf expresses his desire to show off his 'little innovation' to Laing on his next visit to London.<sup>626</sup> This letter also illustrates Scharf's subtle manipulation of the Board in an attempt to exert his own influence upon exhibition policy, as he continues: 'I should like to obtain some good specimens of [the handwriting of Robert] Burns & Sir Walter Scott. The Trustees appear disposed to favour my scheme, but we must proceed cautiously and I rejoice to think that I have been able to insert the thin end of the wedge'.<sup>627</sup> The frames were displayed in the gallery at South Kensington in time for the Easter opening that year, and in his report to the Chairman on visitors over the holiday, Scharf documents the success of his device:

The long case of autograph specimens has proved perhaps the most attractive of all. Young people were puzzled, and some of the elder tried to decipher them. The Royal signatures were more easily followed...Shakespeare's portraits and the autographs being placed very near together, induced people to look from one to the other. The same was the case with the writing and portraits of Queen Elizabeth and King James 1st.<sup>628</sup>

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<sup>623</sup> This can be clearly seen in 1885 photographs of the South Kensington hang; NPG22/2/1, HAL; and see fig.53. See also George Scharf, 12 Jul. 1879, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1879*, p.13, HAL.

<sup>624</sup> George Scharf, inscription on sketch of the hang that shows one of these frames still on display in the ground-floor gallery in 1885; see 'Wall Map List', 1885, Part I, NPG66/2/2/6, HAL.

<sup>625</sup> See minutes of the 108<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 8 Feb. 1871, NPG 1/2, p.177, HAL.

<sup>626</sup> George Scharf to David Laing, 20 May 1871, Papers of David Laing: correspondence (George Scharf), La.IV.17, fol. 8272, CRC, UE.

<sup>627</sup> George Scharf to David Laing, 20 May 1871, Papers of David Laing: correspondence (George Scharf), La.IV.17, fol. 8272, CRC, UE. On 2 June Laing responded: 'It is I think an excellent idea of yours to have a framed autograph letter under each of the Portraits in your National Gallery. But along with the Autograph I would insert an engraved portrait of a moderate size, as the one serves to illustrate the other' (see RP NPG 321, HAL). On the nature of Scharf's relationship with the Trustees, see Chapter 3.

<sup>628</sup> George Scharf to Philip Stanhope (draft), 10 Apr. 1871, papers relating to 109<sup>th</sup> Trustees meeting, 9 May 1871, uncatalogued material, HAL. For a full transcript of this draft letter, see Appendix V. Original autographs for William Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth and James I are not listed in the catalogues or annual reports, and were probably amongst the selected facsimiles.

From this point onwards the acquisition of original manuscript material gained momentum; the first genuine letters and specimens were exhibited in the gallery in 1873. The practice appears to have been largely driven by Scharf, who privately purchased and donated many items for this purpose, and encouraged the trustees to likewise root out relevant documents. In 1872 Stanhope writes to Scharf in relation to his ancestor: 'You asked me to look out at Chevening for an autograph letter of General Stanhope as an offering to the National Portrait Gallery. I have done so accordingly & here inclosed is the result. It is a good specimen I think, the first sentence is in his Secretary's hand & the rest is in his own'.<sup>629</sup> Hardinge similarly presented a letter written by Sir Robert Peel to his father, whilst the latter was Governor-General of India. This references the uprisings of 1845 and demonstrates Peel's similar resilience in the face of adversity at home: 'I am looking out a Peel letter for you. I have one somewhere in wh. Sir Robert writes to my Father just after our battles - & in the middle of his own corn law struggle - "I am fighting a land battle here but I shall drive our enemies across the Sutlej"''.<sup>630</sup> To Deputy Chairman William Smith, Scharf wrote: 'I have been collecting a few autographs of some of the persons who figure in the N.P.G. and I hope to submit them to the Trustees at the next meeting. Could you induce Mr. [George Raphael] Ward to find us a nice little specimen on [...] notepaper of his father's hand-writing at the advanced age when he painted his own portrait & also an example of his earlier hand bearing upon the exercise of his art'.<sup>631</sup>

Substantial collecting in this area continued well into the 1880s, as evidenced in the annual reports, tailing off somewhat towards the end of the decade after the transfer of the collection from South Kensington to the Bethnal Green Museum in 1885. It is clear that many more examples were acquired than could have been displayed; these surplus items possibly found their way into the reference collection portfolios. In the 1881 edition of the National Portrait Gallery catalogue, a list of autographs is included at the back for the first time, indicating the significance placed on this type of material as an integral part of the collection during the period. This list details the variety acquired, ranging from simple signatures and

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<sup>629</sup> Philip Stanhope to George Scharf, 19 May 1872, NPG7/1/1/4/1/11, HAL. 'General Stanhope' is General James Stanhope, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Stanhope. See Add. MS 54226, f.142, BL. Stanhope was himself a keen autograph-hunter; the papers of the Stanhope family at the Kent History and Library Centre contain specimens from his collection; see, for example, U1590/C471 & 2, KHL.

<sup>630</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge to George Scharf 6 Apr. 1876, NPG7/1/1/4/1/13, HAL. See Add. MS 54226, f.126, BL; see also George Scharf, 4 May 1876, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1873*, p.3, HAL.

<sup>631</sup> George Scharf to William Smith, 16 Dec. 1871, NPG20/3, HAL. This probably refers to the self-portrait of painter and engraver James Ward [NPG 309], donated by his son the previous year.

examples of handwriting, to complete autograph letters and other manuscript documents. Their accession did not impact on the annual purchase grant provided by the Treasury, as all examples were donated.<sup>632</sup> Of the 172 listed, 59 were presented by Scharf himself. Alongside the steady accumulation of portrait engravings, this was another means through which he could directly influence the shape of the collection, with the Trustees retaining executive authority over admission, yet largely accepting pertinent examples sourced by Scharf and presented to the Board. His personal library contains a number of bound sale catalogues of autograph letters and historical documents, indicating his interest in this activity.<sup>633</sup> One regular supplier was John Waller of Fleet Street, a bookseller and dealer in autographs. This is from whom in May 1879, for example, he purchased a letter written by the history painter Benjamin Robert Haydon to Robert Southey, for 11 shillings.<sup>634</sup> Pinholes visible at each corner suggest that the last two pages of this three-page letter were actually displayed within the gallery.<sup>635</sup> This is corroborated by the survival of the original exhibition label for the item, written in black ink on cream card with a red margin. Faded marks on the letter, below the artist's signature, testify to its original position within a frame or case (fig. 66). Scharf drafted and commissioned many such labels for display next to manuscript material.<sup>636</sup> Although the texts allude to the subject matter, in this case Haydon's progress in painting *The Agony in the Garden*, they do not attempt to transcribe the contents of documents. Perhaps indicating Scharf's desire for visitors to engage in close scrutiny of the original for this purpose, this also emphasizes the value placed upon the handwriting style itself, in this instance what the bold and lilting script could communicate about Haydon's troubled and occasionally fiery character.

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<sup>632</sup> See Anon., 'The National Portrait Gallery', *The Times*, 24 Nov. 1883, p.8.

<sup>633</sup> See, for example, *List of Interesting Autograph Letters and Original Historical Documents*, John Waller, Fleet Street, 1870–88, 2 vols., SL, HAL.

<sup>634</sup> This was accepted by the Trustees in July 1879; see George Scharf, 12 Jul. 1879, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1873*, p.14, HAL.

<sup>635</sup> It is possible that Scharf simultaneously displayed the text of the first page on the verso, by way of a photographic facsimile. He is known to have employed this method to show the entirety of a document; see George Scharf, draft layout for autographs, 1882, papers relating to the display of the collection, uncatalogued material, HAL. My thanks to NPG Senior Archive and Library Manager Bryony Millan (Jan. 2015) for drawing my attention to this material. Scharf is also known to have been in contact with expert paper splitter William Grisbrook, to ascertain whether autograph letters could be split to show the writing on both sides (see George Scharf, Secretary's journal, 18 Jun. 1883, NPG7/1/1/1/5; and forthcoming NPG website feature by Jacob Simon on the history of conservation at the National Portrait Gallery (2018)).

<sup>636</sup> See, for example, George Scharf, personal diary, 4 & 14 Sep. 1873, NPG7/3/1/30, HAL; see also drafts contained within packet titled 'Card Tablets for Autographs, 1887' (uncatalogued material relating to the display of the collection, HAL).

The combination of portraits with autographs had an established precedent from the eighteenth century. In *The cult of the autograph letter in England*, Alan Munby argues that the publication of James Granger's *Biographical History of England* (1769–74) provided a strong stimulus for the collecting of both: 'to the devotees of the grangerized book the autograph letter soon became as desirable an object for insertion as a portrait'.<sup>637</sup> This fashion for extra-illustration, to which Granger gave his name, was aided by his inclusion in addition to biographical text, of a list of all known engraved likenesses of the sitter. Impressions of these engravings after historical portraits were collected to illustrate editions of the *History*, leading to what Roy Strong has described as 'the consequent terrifying defacement of early printed books'.<sup>638</sup> John Thane's *British autography: a collection of fac-similies of the handwriting of royal and illustrious personages, with their authentic portraits*, the first part of which was issued in 1788, was the first publication to combine portraits and handwriting specimens on the printed page. The work consisted of 269 portraits, each accompanied by the engraved signature of the subject.<sup>639</sup> Marcia Pointon argues that such publications reflect a 'major shift from the idealism of the classical model to an insistent materialism'; a preoccupation with 'matters of authenticity' and the physical evidence of a person's existence.<sup>640</sup> She cites Charles John Smith, who contends in the preface to his published autography, that once 'the art of writing was no longer left to the professional scribe...Next to the portrait...the autograph of a great man is the most valuable notice of him'.<sup>641</sup> Munby's study covers the period from the end of the 1700s to about 1914 which saw the largely middle class craze for collecting autographs - or 'autographomania' - reach its zenith. Dawson Turner, the banker, botanist, antiquary and notable collector of autographs, is given special attention. In the preface to his index of over 500 examples of the handwriting of eminent men (1848), Turner makes a strong

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<sup>637</sup> Alan N.L. Munby, *The Cult of the Autograph Letter in England*. (London: Athlone Press, 1962), p.5. On autograph collecting and the value of autograph letters, see also Alexander M. Broadley, *Chats on Autographs* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1910).

<sup>638</sup> Roy C. Strong, *And When Did You Last See Your Father?*, p.61. Supplementary volumes of portraits were subsequently issued specifically to illustrate editions of Granger's *History*. These included *Richardson's Collection* (1792–1812) and *Woodburn's Gallery of Rare Portraits* (1816). On the history of extra-illustration, see Peltz, *Facing the Text*.

<sup>639</sup> Scharf's personal library contains an embellished version of Thane's 'Authography', published in 1854; see SL, HAL. Light annotations and a handwritten index of portraits in the back confirm his familiarity with this publication, which is also supplemented with facsimiles of autograph letters and other specimens of handwriting.

<sup>640</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p.66.

<sup>641</sup> Charles John Smith, *Autographs of Royal, Noble, Learned and Remarkable Personages conspicuous in English History, from the Reign of Richard the Second to Charles the Second...* (London: J.B. Nichols & Son, 1829), preface, as quoted in Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p.67.



case for the autograph's deserved position alongside the likeness, as a means of communicating aspects of character and identity:

Autographs are indicative of the movements of the mind as well as of the pen. Even where mere signatures, they have their value. I never met with the man who was not gratified to see how Newton wrote, or how Milton or Bacon formed their letters; who did not love to trace, in the peculiarities of their respective hand-writings, the precise accuracy of Gray, the lucid clearness of Franklin, the lightning's rapidity of Napoleon, the feebleness of Darnley, the impetuosity of Bothwell, the decisiveness, not without display, of our virgin Queen. Indeed, so universal is this feeling, that an autograph appears at the present time a no less indispensable accompaniment to biography than a portrait; and both for the same cause, as clues to the deciphering of character.<sup>642</sup>

In addition to style, the content of an autograph letter and its capacity to offer insight into personality, was highly valued. John L. Anderson, another banker and autograph collector, admits in a letter to Turner that the 'difference in interest and value between the signature of an individual and a letter giving the *impress of his mind*, or conveying some sentiment by which to judge his character, must of course be very great; but when we cannot procure the one we must be satisfied with the other'.<sup>643</sup> Thomas Carlyle similarly advocated the importance of the autograph letter in his 'search for an ever more human contact'.<sup>644</sup> In a draft letter addressed to David Laing proposing a Scottish National Portrait Gallery, he insists that next to a genuine portrait these are the 'directest impressions one can hope to get of the man'.<sup>645</sup> Sections of his revised version of this text formed the basis of the famous passage read by Lord Stanhope in the House of Lords in 1856, in justification for the establishment of a portrait gallery in London. In his revision Carlyle also solidifies his ideas on these two forms of interpretation:

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<sup>642</sup> Dawson Turner, *Guide to the Historian, the Biographer, the Antiquary...towards the Verification of Manuscripts...* (Yarmouth: C. Sloman, 1848), preface. In her 2011 essay on the early nineteenth-century practice of collecting album versus by literary personalities, Samantha Matthews similarly locates value in that fact that these texts are written in the author's own hand and as such function as 'an indexical trace of the writer's body and mind'; see Samantha Matthews, 'Importunate Applications and Old Affections: Robert Southey's Album Verses', *Romanticism*, 17, 1 (2011), p.78.

<sup>643</sup> John L. Anderson to Dawson Turner, 20 Sep. 1824 (source for original not known), as quoted in Munby, *The Cult of the Autograph Letter in England*, p.61, emphasis mine.

<sup>644</sup> North, 'Portraying Presence', p.483.

<sup>645</sup> Thomas Carlyle to David Laing, 2 May 1854, as quoted in North, 'Portraying Presence', p.483.

[O]f course, a man's *actions* are the most complete and indubitable stamp of him; but without these aids, of Portraits and Letters, they are in themselves so infinitely abstruse a stamp, and so confused by foreign rumour and false tradition of them, as to be oftenest undecipherable with certainty.<sup>646</sup>

There is no evidence to suggest that Scharf was specifically influenced by Carlyle's thinking, or that the latter was directly involved in this subsequent Gallery scheme.<sup>647</sup> I contend, however, that these same motivations governed Scharf's persistent amassing and display of autographs alongside collection portraits. Such was the importance attached to this simultaneous approach that his concern over the delay in displaying examples of George Eliot's handwriting along with her newly-acquired portrait by Sir Frederic William Burton (fig. 67), was recorded in the minutes of the Trustees' meeting in May 1883.<sup>648</sup> Although the chalk drawing was hung on a special screen at the foot of the eastern staircase at South Kensington, to greet visitors upon entry to the Gallery, difficulties in procuring tinted glass to modify the 'glaring white' of the manuscript papers prevented them being shown concurrently to the public.<sup>649</sup> The clearest indication that we have of Scharf's intention in this regard, is an opinion attributed to him by the author of an article on the Gallery in the *British Almanac and Companion* for 1883: 'The framing of autograph letters near the portraits of their writers adds greatly to the interest; such for instance as the letters of Horace Walpole, Edmund Burke, Isaac Newton, and David Garrick. "A letter is better than a lock of hair, for historical purposes", says Mr Scharf.<sup>650</sup> It suggests a belief that, functioning as an extension of the pictorial likeness, this material held the potential to further elucidate a subject's character. Beyond the provision of dates and biographical facts, such contextual documentation was employed to provoke a more

<sup>646</sup> Thomas Carlyle to David Laing, 3 May 1854; The Carlyle Letters Online, 2007; <http://carlyleletters.dukejournals.org/cgi/content/full/29/1/lt-18540503-TC-DL-01?maxtoshow=&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=david+laing&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&resourcetype=HWCIT>, accessed 27 Jan. 2016, original emphasis.

<sup>647</sup> It is likely that the two men were of shared sympathies. Although his 'literary obligations' prevented Carlyle from being an involved Trustee (see Philip Stanhope to Benjamin Disraeli, 19 Feb. 1859, U1950/C333/9, KHL), he visited the NPG often during the 1870s, whilst Scharf visited Carlyle at home in 1874 to discuss portraits of John Knox; see George Scharf, personal diary, 6 Jun. 1874, NPG7/3/1/31, HAL. See also SSB 91 (NPG7/3/4/2/102, p.60, HAL), for Scharf's sketch of Carlyle seated in his garden on this occasion.

<sup>648</sup> See minutes of the 166<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 2 May 1883, NPG 1/4, p.44, HAL. The portrait is shown in position in a watercolour by George Scharf dated 1 September 1885 (NPG 2747d). The purple ink used by Eliot in fact began to fade shortly after it was exhibited in 1883, and Scharf was forced to remove the specimens from display the following year. On this fading, see also forthcoming NPG website feature by Jacob Simon on the history of conservation at the National Portrait Gallery (2018).

<sup>649</sup> See draft label text compiled by George Scharf in October 1883; 'Card Tablets for Autographs, 1887', papers relating to the display of the collection, uncatalogued material, HAL.

<sup>650</sup> Anon., *British Almanac and Companion* (London: Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, 1830–1883), pp.115–6.

intuitive response to the sitter on the part of the viewer. This chimes closely with the preoccupations of later nineteenth-century portraitists, epitomized by George Frederic Watts, who sought to convey a sense of his subject's inner self through a highly wrought, yet compositionally simplistic, depiction of their outer appearance. In her chapter on Watts's Hall of Fame portraits, Lara Perry observes that the artist's project and the NPG's drive for national portraits did not initially cohere. Whilst the Gallery's Ten-Year Rule precluded the acceptance of portraits of many contemporary sitters, Perry also suggests that 'Watts's move away from the convention of portraying sitters through a graphic system of gesture and symbol was not consistent with the collection of the NPG, which was typified by portraits that made overt description of the activities, rather than the character, of the sitter'.<sup>651</sup> I argue that Scharf's display strategy represented an attempt to counteract this emphasis. In contrast to pictorial signifiers of a subject's identity, autograph letters and manuscripts - as the physical residue of a sitter's existence - could offer clues as to who an individual really was, further interpreting personality by inviting an analysis of both style and content.

In the same year that Scharf's Haydon letter was displayed, for example, the Trustees accepted two additional manuscript items relating to the artist.<sup>652</sup> These were donated by his former pupil Georgina Zorlin and comprised a letter in which he imparts technical advice on painting (dated 9 March 1824), and a sketch of an artist's palette by his own hand, showing an arrangement of colours (fig. 68). It is likely that all three were framed and displayed in close proximity to his portrait by Zorlin, which she had donated to the NPG in 1878 (fig. 69).<sup>653</sup> Upon inspecting this picture, the Gallery visitor could simultaneously apprehend not only the format of his handwriting, but also the nature of his thoughts on efficient artistic practice and his serious attitude towards the instruction of his student. Even more noteworthy was when the contents of an autograph letter directly referenced its associated portrait. This was the case with a letter written by William Pulteney, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Bath to Elizabeth Montagu on the progress of his own portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds (fig. 70). The picture was purchased in 1872 from Henry Robinson-Montagu, 6<sup>th</sup> Baron Rokeby, who also donated the letter in the same year. Its acquisition warranted particular mention from Scharf in the Gallery's annual report for

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<sup>651</sup> Lara Perry, 'Nationalizing Watts: the Hall of Fame and the National Portrait Gallery', in *Representations of G.F. Watts: Art Making in Victorian Culture*, Colin Trodd and Stephanie Brown eds. (Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), p.127.

<sup>652</sup> See George Scharf, 12 Jul. 1879, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1873*, p.14, HAL.

<sup>653</sup> The fact of their display is again confirmed by the visibility of pinholes in the corner of the documents, and the existence of original exhibition labels for both items; see NPG autograph letters collection (Haydon).

1873.<sup>654</sup> Again, traces of pinholes in the corners and the survival of the original exhibition label, suggest that this item was put on display in the public gallery, probably close to the portrait itself. The script in Bath's distinctive and confident hand begins with an enthusiastic opening, which hints at an exuberant personality:

Ten thousand thanks to you, Dear Madam, for the most agreeable, most lively, most sensible, and most spirited letter, I ever read. The Doctor was with me, when I received it, and by my eagerness in opening it, and perpetual smile whilst I was reading it, He concluded it must be a letter from you, and insisted upon seeing it.<sup>655</sup>

He continues with an account of his latest sitting for the portrait, divulging the following to his correspondent: 'I have discovered a secret by being often at Mr. Reynolds, that I fancy, he is sorry I should know. I find that none of these great Painters finish any of their Pictures themselves. The same Person, (but who he is, I know not) works for Ramsay, Reynolds, & another, call'd Hudson' (fig. 71).<sup>656</sup>

Scharf further experimented with the range of material that could be employed to figuratively 'flesh out' the character of a represented sitter. For instance, to accompany the portrait of social philosopher Jeremy Bentham as a child [NPG 196], he sourced a folio sheet containing critical observations in Dr. Samuel Johnson's hand on some Latin verses composed by the sitter when at Oxford University.<sup>657</sup> This is dated 1760 when the sitter was just 12 years old. It is also the date that the picture, which was displayed on the eastern wall of the ground-floor recess at South Kensington, was executed and the age at which Bentham is depicted. Scharf laid the specimen before the Trustees in May 1881 and records his reasoning: '[a]s these verses were associated with the portrait of Jeremy Bentham as a boy already in the Gallery, the Secretary begged leave to present them to be preserved with the picture'.<sup>658</sup> Indeed, the poem about the accession of George III is itself represented in the painting, appearing on the table beside which the subject stands (fig. 72). Although not an example of Bentham's handwriting, Scharf saw the potential of this specimen to both provide additional

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<sup>654</sup> See George Scharf, 5 May 1873, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1873*, p.4, HAL.

<sup>655</sup> William Pulteney, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Bath to Elizabeth Montagu, 15 Oct. 1761; NPG autograph letters collection (Bath).

<sup>656</sup> See also John Kerslake, *Early Georgian Portraits* (London: HMSO, 1977), p.14.

<sup>657</sup> Add. MS 54225, f.59, BL. This manuscript contains Johnson's handwriting only, his points seemingly listed according to lines in the poem.

<sup>658</sup> See minutes of the 157<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 28 May 1881, NPG 1/3, p.247, HAL.

context for the portrait and to divulge something of his precociousness through Johnson's critique. The document concludes with the following: 'When these objections are removed, the copy will, I believe, be received, for it is a very pretty performance for a young man'.<sup>659</sup> The portrait was intended as a celebration of Bentham's precocity; the inclusion of this note next to the picture serves to underline the extraordinariness of his youthful achievements.<sup>660</sup> It was possibly displayed alongside a letter written by Bentham, which is also known to have been in the collection. A long frame containing these manuscripts and other documents can be clearly seen beneath the portrait in one of a series of photographs of the NPG hang, taken by Praetorius and Wood & Co. in 1885 (fig. 73).<sup>661</sup> The procurement and display of manuscript material reached its height during the years at South Kensington. Examples continued to be accepted into the collection in the first decades of the twentieth century, but never at the rate with which they were acquired throughout Scharf's tenure, nor with the level of enthusiasm that he applied to the project.<sup>662</sup> In 1970 the majority of autograph letters, no longer on display in the gallery, were donated to the British Museum with the intention of making them more accessible to scholars.<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>659</sup> As quoted by Scharf in the 1881 annual report, where further details of his gift are also recorded (see George Scharf, 6 Jul. 1881, *NPG Report of the Trustees 1881*, p.6, HAL). Paul J. Korshin suggests that Bentham's original manuscript for the poem is now unlocated: see 'To the Editor: New B.M. MSS', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 9 Jul. 1970, p.174.

<sup>660</sup> See John Ingamells, *National Portrait Gallery, Mid-Georgian Portraits 1760–1790* (London: NPG, 2004), p.49.

<sup>661</sup> See Add. MS 54224, ff.60–61v, BL. This frame can also be seen in an annotated sketch of the ground-floor recess, which illustrates the display of other 'original letters', 'autographs' and 'specimens of handwriting'; see George Scharf, 'Wall Map List', Part I., 19 Aug. 1885, NPG66/2/2/6, HAL.

<sup>662</sup> This material continued to be displayed with the portraits at the Bethnal Green Museum (see nt. 622) and after the collection had moved into its purpose-built gallery in 1896. The earliest photographs of the display at St Martin's Place dated 1911, clearly show free-standing display cases containing engravings and what look like autograph letters, positioned in the centre of the rooms; NPG22/2/3, HAL.

<sup>663</sup> Add. MSS. 54224–54226, BL. The material that was retained by the Trustees, relates specifically to painting and portraiture, and has a direct bearing on the NPG's collection; see Richard Ormond, 'New B.M MSS.', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 18 Sep. 1970, p.1039.

## Conclusion:

This thesis functions as an unprecedented analysis of George Scharf's professional practice, during his tenure as first Secretary and then Director of the National Portrait Gallery, between 1857 and 1895. Detailed and prolonged interrogation of material held in the Scharf Archive, alongside the Gallery's wider institutional records and external archival resources, has enabled me to reconstruct - in a manner not previously attempted - a sense of the breadth of his activities in the service of the NPG's early Trustees. Yet in these five chapters, I also examine Scharf's particular contribution to the evolution of art history as a discipline and to the professionalization of museum practice in Britain in the second half of the 1800s. In setting Scharf's individual endeavours against the broader development of the nineteenth-century art museum, I argue for his centrality to both of these fields.

Speaking for the Trustees upon accepting into the collection Scharf's portrait by William Walter Ouless [NPG 985], the NPG Chairman Charles Stewart Hardinge makes the following bold claim: 'The record of our proceedings contains repeated acknowledgements on our part of the great value which the Institution has derived from Mr Scharf's untiring labours, as well as the special & rare knowledge which he brings to bear on all questions connected with the History of Art in this Country'.<sup>664</sup> Indeed, all evidence uncovered in the course of my research suggests that Scharf's influence and expertise in British portraiture was recognized during his lifetime, and not only by internal colleagues. However, his reputation has arguably not withstood the test of time in comparison with professional peers including, for example, Charles Lock Eastlake and Augustus Wollaston Franks.<sup>665</sup> Similarly, although Scharf's contributions to the burgeoning realm of art historical studies were prolific over the course of his career, his name does not rank among authors such as Gustav Waagen, Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, or Frederic George Stephens and Ronald Sutherland Gower in Britain, whose groundbreaking survey works and monographs are still recognized by scholars.<sup>666</sup> In contrast, and probably symptomatic of the all-encompassing nature of Scharf's

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<sup>664</sup> Charles Stewart Hardinge (transcript), minutes of the 178<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees, 24 Mar. 1886, NPG 1/4, p. 143, HAL.

<sup>665</sup> Who are both the subject of scholarly publications; see Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World*; and Caygill and Cherry eds., *A. W. Franks*.

<sup>666</sup> See, for example, Gustav Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*; Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, *The Early Flemish Painters: Notices of their Lives and Works* (London: John Murray, 1856); Frederic

official role, his various scholarly productions (many referenced throughout this study) largely took the form of contained published notices on historic portraits, or specific collection catalogues.<sup>667</sup> As a young man, however, Scharf was no less ambitious than those authors cited above. In the 1860s he worked extensively on a broad project he termed his 'Chronology of Art', which he planned to publish with William Longman, though this remained uncompleted.<sup>668</sup> It may well have been one of his anticipated 'works of artistic importance' that he was obliged to surrender, due to pressing commitments at the Gallery.<sup>669</sup> It is Scharf's apparent absence from both these professional and literary histories that my thesis, to some extent, seeks to redress.

In accordance with Lionel Cust, who is quoted at the start of this work, I contend that Scharf's professional legacy is intricately bound up with the history of the National Portrait Gallery, so involved was he in the expansion of the collection and the development of the Gallery's exhibition environments. Consequently, Scharf's specific contribution to the nascent discipline of art history and to the establishment of museum practice as we recognize it today is perhaps not immediately quantifiable. This, however, is a concern that runs throughout my chapters and one that each, in turn, attempts to draw out and enunciate. Chapter 1, for example, argues that in the course of undertaking thorough and painstaking research to authenticate portraits intended for the collection, Scharf simultaneously originated a methodology for the study of historical portraiture, which was subsequently enshrined in the research practices of the Institution. In Chapter 2 I map the extent of Scharf's social and professional networks, bringing together evidence of his continued interaction with a range of influential figures, and reinstating him as a crucial component of the Victorian art and museum worlds.

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George Stephens, *The Early Works of Edwin Landseer, R.A* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1869); and Ronald Sutherland Gower, *Romney and Lawrence* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1892). Scharf knew Stephens and Gower personally. Gower, appointed NPG Trustee in 1874, was a particular friend, who appeared at Scharf's Ashley Place gatherings during the early 1890s; see, for example, George Scharf, personal diary, 25 Jan. 1894, NPG7/3/1/51, HAL.

<sup>667</sup> Scharf's articles were most regularly published in *Archaeologia*, *The Athenaeum* and *The Times*. Scharf himself recognized the disparate nature of his scholarly output. Towards the end of his life he devised a scheme to bring together his various essays in one 'portable volume'; see George Scharf to John Evans (President of the Society of Antiquaries), 26 Mar. 1887, Correspondence to the Society, 1887, SAL: 'As I am not likely to write much more, I should like to see these put together – with others – in a collective form'. This project did not come to fruition, however; even his expansive research into portraits of Mary Queen of Scots was not published in book form until after his death; see Cust, *Notes on the Authentic Portraits of Mary Queen of Scots*.

<sup>668</sup> See George Scharf, personal diaries, 16 Dec. 1862 and 31 Dec. 1863; NPG7/3/1/19 & 21, HAL.

<sup>669</sup> See George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 20 Jun. 1864 (printed copy), NPG20/2, HAL. For a full transcript of this letter, see also Appendix I.

Chapter 3 examines the nature of Scharf's relationships with various members of the NPG's Board of Trustees, arguing for his increasing authority over the length of his career, and ability to influence decisions concerning both acquisitions and wider Gallery procedures. In Chapter 4 I set Scharf's experiments with arranging the portraits on the walls of the NPG's early exhibition spaces, in the context of contemporary debates surrounding the efficient organization of public art collections and the educational potential of the nineteenth-century museum. In investigating Scharf's particular curatorial decisions to this end, I also analyze his own participation in this discourse. The final chapter focuses upon Scharf's efforts to interpret and contextualize the growing collection for a varied audience. These include, for example, his ongoing scheme to collect and display autograph letters and specimens of handwriting adjacent to associated portraits in the gallery. Furthermore, I consider Scharf's drive to enhance the explanatory nature of the written picture labels in order to provide just the type of 'ready information' required by visitors to the NPG.<sup>670</sup> In contrast I additionally examine his steady development of the official collection catalogue along more scholarly lines. By increasing the interpretative content of this expanded-format catalogue, but also in applying his own rigorous standards of research, Scharf sought to produce a publication that would function additionally outside of the gallery visit as an important reference tool.

This thesis is supported by primary evidence gathered during a three-year research project. My investigations into Scharf's professional practice and the arguments that I make have been directly informed by the archival material I have been able to access and scrutinize, within this relatively contained time period. As outlined above, the central focus of my research has remained the Scharf Archive held at the National Portrait Gallery, in conjunction with an analysis of pertinent institutional records generated by Scharf during nearly 40 years of service. Given, however, Scharf's pervasiveness in all aspects connected with the early history of the Gallery, I have no doubt that additional evidence relative to this study remains embedded throughout the NPG's holdings. In this regard, I look forward to future research that will further illuminate and underpin the principal themes of my work. Likewise, I have found it necessary to examine material in a number of external archives, according to where I have been guided by developing lines of enquiry. Yet, considering the quantity of Scharf's correspondents alone, I feel confident that other examples of his letters and notes lie undetected; perhaps especially in those various libraries and archives surviving at grand

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<sup>670</sup> See George Scharf to Philip Stanhope (draft), 10 Apr. 1871, papers relating to 109<sup>th</sup> Trustees meeting, 9 May 1871, uncatalogued material, HAL. For a full transcript of this draft letter, see Appendix V.



country houses, whose one-time collections were the objects of Scharf's intimate study.<sup>671</sup>

The identification and collation of material in such repositories could assist in building an even clearer understanding of Scharf's professional reach.

I intend my research, as it stands, to contribute significantly to studies in the histories of museums and collections, and also in relation to the wider fields of art historiography and the history of professionalization in Britain. In this thesis, I position Scharf as an emerging museum professional and suggest that he was engaged in working collaboratively with his colleagues in the sector, to establish the standards and mechanisms that constitute modern-day professional museum practice. However, more work certainly remains to be done to cultivate the ideas that I have generated here. Though I begin to consider Scharf's activities in relation to the work of his contemporaries, I believe that my arguments could be strengthened through close comparison with the careers of a range of official counterparts.<sup>672</sup> In so doing, it may be possible to chart or trace the emergence of this professional subset and to draw out evidence of conscious collaboration between individuals, to this end. Moreover, an investigation of this type would ensure that the category of art museum practitioners could be firmly inserted into a larger history of the development of the professions during the later Victorian period.

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<sup>671</sup> For example, Knowsley Hall in Cheshire or Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire.

<sup>672</sup> A forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Art Historiography* (2018), focusing on the emergence of the museum professional in nineteenth-century Britain and comprising articles on the careers of a number of influential figures, is intended to facilitate just this type of comparison.

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## Appendices

**Appendix I: Lionel Cust, 12 Sep. 1895, 'Tribute to the memory of Sir George Scharf, K.C.B', *NPG Report of the Trustees 1895*, p.4, HAL.**

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF GEORGE SCHARF, K.C.B.

Resolved that –

The Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, at this their last meeting in the temporary offices, 20, Great George Street, Westminster, cannot separate without placing on record their deep sense of the loss which they have sustained in the death of Sir George Scharf, K.C.B. late Director, Keeper and Secretary of the National Portrait Gallery. At the time of the foundation of the National Portrait Gallery, in 1857, Mr. George Scharf was selected for the post of first keeper and secretary to the Gallery. Mr Scharf had already sustained distinction as an artist and a draughtsman, and had achieved conspicuous success as an art director of the great Manchester art treasures Exhibition in 1857. From the date of his first appointment to within a few days of this death Mr Scharf devoted the whole interest of his life with single-minded energy to discharging the duties of his post.

Mr Scharf was primarily responsible for the selection of the first 982 portraits secured by the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery. To this work Mr Scharf brought on his own part knowledge and abilities of an extensive and remarkable character, in addition to an unflagging zeal and industry, all of which qualities he exercised unabated to the last hour of his life. As Secretary to the Board of Trustees Mr Scharf attended 208 consecutive meetings, and was only prevented by bodily infirmity from attending the last meeting held during his tenure in office. When, on completing the seventieth year of his age Mr Scharf came under the rule of the Civil Service with regard to compulsory retirement, it was the unanimous feeling of the Trustees (as set forth in the Minutes of the 198<sup>th</sup> meeting of January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1892) that a special effort should be made to secure an extension of Mr Scharf's invaluable services to the National Portrait Gallery, to which the government acceded with pleasure. Mr Scharf was thus able to continue his duties as director, keeper and secretary of this Gallery until increasing sickness and bodily infirmity made it impossible for him to continue performing them. At their 209<sup>th</sup> meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1895, the Trustees heard with great pleasure that the Sovereign had been pleased to confer upon Mr Scharf the honour of K.C.B. in recognition of his services. The Trustees subsequently received with equal pleasure the news that the First Lord of the Treasury had selected Sir George Scharf K.C.B., as one of their colleagues in their trust. To the infinite sorrow of the Trustees they were prevented by the sad event of Sir George Scharf's death from welcoming him as their colleague at this Board. The Trustees also most deeply regret that they were thus deprived of the services of Sir George Scharf in supervising the installation of the collections in the new building, and that his life was not spared long enough to witness the completion of the great work with which his name will ever be identified. To this record of the great loss sustained by the National Portrait Gallery by the death of Sir George Scharf, the Trustees append their own united feeling that, where the public service has been deprived of a zealous and devoted servant, they have themselves lost a courteous, genial and very highly-valued friend.

**Appendix II: George Scharf to Philip Stanhope, 20. Jun. 1864, official printed letter outlining his duties and requesting an increase in salary; printed copy NPG20/3, HAL.**

Private

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY,  
29, GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
WESTMINSTER  
*20<sup>th</sup> June, 1864*

My Lord,

I have now had the honour of serving as Secretary to the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery during a term of seven years.

When that office was conferred on me in 1857, at a Salary of £300 per annum, I little foresaw how completely the duties, both directly and indirectly connected with this Gallery, would absorb my time and attention. I had fully expected to have found leisure in evening time to complete works of artistic importance, in which I was already engaged, and which I afterwards found myself compelled to relinquish one by one in favour of the Portrait Gallery interest. This could only be done at heavy pecuniary losses to myself, in the way of compensation to publishers who had relied on my assistance.

Many of the duties that I now perform, and which so entirely and exclusively engage my attention, have been prompted by the deep interest I feel in the objects and in the prosperity of this Gallery. They were voluntary; and subsequent experience has, to a great extent, proved their value.

If, without encroaching too much on your Lordship's time, I may state a few of them, I shall feel deeply grateful for the indulgence.

I would state that, in addition to the ordinary and only so-far-expected work of correspondence, registering, collecting biographical notes, examining and reporting on pictures, as well as preparing catalogues and superintending the apartments and servants, I have from the first made it an invariable rule to sketch, trace, and minutely describe every picture that has been brought under the notice of the Trustees. These sketches are the property of the Trustees, and are contained in a series of portable books, duly numbered and paged, whilst the tracings from the actual pictures are now so numerous as entirely to fill a very large press which is kept between the windows in the Secretary's room. These records have already been found very useful, both to Artists for reference, as well as important as a means of checking dealers and others from palming off the same picture more than once on the notice of the Board.

These sketches and tracings are not confined to pictures which have been seen and dismissed by the Trustees; but include many notes and tracings of valuable pictures in public and private collections which have been appealed to in the course of examining the authenticity of Portraits when offered to the Board. In many of these instances, whilst the pictures offered were declined as spurious, the Collection of the Trustees became enriched by tracings and careful records of the most genuine portraits known to exist.

From the facilities of access which my position has afforded me to the large Collections of Portraits in the Royal Galleries, University Colleges and Corporation Halls, and the mansions of the nobility, like Blenheim, Knole, Arundel, Welbeck and Gorhambury, as well as Lambeth Palace, I have been enabled to collect a large mass of notes of the most authentic and finest

Portraits in the country, all of which, when transcribed, will become the property of the Trustees of this Gallery.

I may now report myself in a position to offer, very respectfully, to the Trustees – with their further assistance – a complete Catalogue *Raisonné* of all the most important painted Portraits of great historical characters in England, especially Royal Portraits; the latter having especially engaged the attention of the late Sir George Cornwall Lewis, with whom I had the honour of much conversation on the subject.

To further these researches, time and means are requisite, and I have no alternative, but to confess that I find the pursuit so absorbing as not only to occupy the ordinary working hours, but even to encroach on those of the evening, which are usually devoted to recreation and repose. Feeling, however, that information of this kind, if collected during the earlier existence of the Portrait Gallery, would possess a tenfold value to that if commenced at a later period, I have zealously entered upon the work.

I trust that your Lordship may concur in the views that I have ventured to express, and I very humbly request that, should these statements appear sufficiently valid, your Lordship would be pleased to invite the Trustees to consider whether, in the undivided attention which I give to the interests of this Gallery, and in comparison to the payment afforded to Secretaries of other Government Institutions similarly connected with Art, I may not be justified in soliciting an augmentation of the annual income assigned to my office.

I have the honour to be  
MY LORD  
Your most obedient humble Servant  
GEORGE SCHARF  
*Secretary and Keeper.*

To the Earl Stanhope, P.S.A.,  
&c., &c., &c.  
*Chairman of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery.*

**Appendix III: George Scharf, handwritten draft of 'scheme' for a reference collection, 12 Mar. 1860, NPG7/1/1/3/3, HAL.**

[Original deletions and underlinings shown]

The objects of the N.P.G are

To collect portraits of British worthies & celebrities.

To purchase such subjects when offered for sale or to receive them as donations.

To afford the public ready access to them and illustrate them by historical information.

Portraits to include paintings, drawings, miniatures, enamels, busts, medallions, coins medals & engravings on any material.

Books for historical and biographical reference and engravings from authentic portraits also have been received.



Might be extended to - Subordinate Departments

A: Accurate and authenticated copies made expressly from such family portraits as are not likely ever to be parted with; such as pictures entailed with property, being heir-looms or otherwise immoveable.

The approbation of the copy, for fidelity &c to be written by the owner of each picture.

The employment of making such copies might occasionally afford an honourable emolument or means of reward to academic prize-men.

One at least of the judges of these copies to be a practical artist without reference to the subject represented and to decide on technical grounds alone.

All copies to represent the originals faithfully both in form and colour. The latter – whether faded or darkened – to be rendered just as they appear to the copier and the judges at the time.

Permanence ~~and~~ of colour and accuracy to be the first considerations. Accidental flaws, cracks, scratches, and scaling off of colours not to be copied or ~~undated~~ indicated.

Plaster casts & Electrotypes of the finest portrait busts, medallions & coins would also be very desirable.

B: Illustrations of each important period of British History so as to afford, for the benefit of Artists, costume, character and ornaments, and to display the physiognomy or countenances of the time even where the names of the personages are no longer known with certainty.

The whole History of England might be illustrated by collected materials in Portraiture & costume.

Furniture and Architecture as belonging to other departments to be kept quite distinct.

C: A collection of authentic and first-rate specimens of the most celebrated portrait painters who have wrought in England & apart from consideration of persons represented.

A genuine Holbein, Anto. Moore, Marc Geerards, De Heere, Dobson, Walker &c &c. One of each might suffice.

D: A scheme of Historical illustration based on a copy of Hume's England, marked with reference to the most authentic paintings in existence representing the leading personages. Both Bromley and Granger derive all their information though means of engravings and many of the best pictures were in this time un-engraved and several still remain to be made public.

E: Scenes of historical events such as Henry VIII granting a charter to the Barber Surgeons, the Field of the Cloth of Gold, Queen Elizabeth going to Hunsdon House, Lord Burleigh in the Court of Wards. The Death of Chatham, The Reform parliament &c &c would be very valuable.

George Scharf Jnr.

**Appendix IV: Printed subscription list for the portrait of George Scharf by William Walter Oules, 1884, copy RP NPG 985.**

The names in this list are arranged according to rank and then alphabetically. It is testament to Scharf's wide and varied circles of friends and supporters, among them: aristocrats, politicians, museum professionals, scholars and artists. Upon formerly presenting the portrait [NPG 985] to the NPG Trustees, the leaders of the Scharf Portrait Committee (Edward Stanhope and William Frederick Beauford) asserted: 'It is in recognition of [Scharf's] services that not only a very large number of his personal friends, but many eminent public men who have been officially connected with him, have added their names to the list of subscribers'.<sup>673</sup>

SUSCRIBERS TO THE  
PORTRAIT OF  
GEORGE SCHARF, ESQ., C.B

The Duke of Devonshire, K.G.	Colonel Creaton
The Duke of Bedford, K.G.	Hewitt Davis
The Duke of Cleveland, K.G.	F.M. O'Donoghue
The Marchioness Camden.	F.A. Eaton, M.A.
The Earl of Derby, K.G.	Talfourd Ely, F.S.A.
The Earl of Jersey	Miss Ewart.
The Earl of Rosebery	L. Fagan.
The Earl Stanhope	J. Fergusson, F.R.S.
The Countess Stanhope	R. Fisher, F.S.A.
The Earl of Darnley	A.W. Franks, F.R.S, F.S.A.
The Earl of Normanton	G. Godwin, F.R.S, F.S.A.
The Earl Beauchamp	Everard Green, F.S.A.
The Right Hon. Lord Randolph Churchill, M.P.	Captain Philip Green
Lord Arthur Russell	H.A. Grueber, F.S.A.
Lord Ronald Gower	G.R. Harding.
Viscount Hardinge	R.S. Holford
Viscountess Ossington	Wharton P. Hood, M.D.
Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice	J.C. Horsley, R.A.
Lord De L'Isle and Dudley	E.C. Ireland.
Baroness Burdett Coutts	P.H. Lawrence
Lord Lamington	H. Hives Lee
Lord Wimbourne	W.C. Lefroy
Lady Wantage	G.W. Leveson-Gower, F.S.A
The Right Hon. W.E. Gladstone, M.P.	C.L. Lewes
The Right Hon. Edward Stanhope, M.P.	Bunnell Lewis.

<sup>673</sup> See minutes of the 178<sup>th</sup> Trustees, 24 Mar. 1886, NPG 1/4, p. 142, HAL.

The Hon. Mrs Edward Stanhope	Messrs. Longmans & Co.
The Hon. Philip Stanhope	Professor A. Michaelis
The Right Hon. Sir Henry Holland, Bart, K.C.M.G, M.P.	H.S. Milman, F.S.A.
The Right Hon. Sir Charles Dilke, Bart, M.P.	F.D. Mocatta
The Right Hon. A.J. Beresford Hope, M.P.	J. Murray, F.S.A.
The Right Hon. W.H. Smith, M.P.	B. Nattali, F.S.A.
The Right Hon. Colonel North	N.H. Nicolas
The Right Hon. Harold Dillon, F.S.A.	J.E. Nightingale
Sir Julian Goldsmid, Bart, M.P.	Philip Norman
Sir Richard Wallace, Bart, K.C.B.	Edmund Oldfield, M.A, F.S.A.
Sir Frederick Pollock, Bart	J.L. Pattisson
Sir Frederic Leighton, Bart, P.R.A.	C.A. Payne
Sir John. E. Millais, Bart, R.A.	Rupert Potter
Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B	E.J. Poynter, R.A.
Sir Frederick[sic] Burton, Knt.	W. Fraser Rae
Edward Augustus Bond, C.B, LL.D, F.S.A.	C. Hercules Read, F.S.A.
Henry Reeve, C.B., D.C.L, F.S.A.	H.G. Reid
H.N. Armstead, R.A.	J. Ramsey Reid
E.J. Baron, F.S.A.	Charles Sangster
Edric Bayley, M.A.	Dr. Sieveking
W.P. Beale	Geo. Smith, F.S.A.
W.F. Beauford	R.G.H. Somerset
Doyne, C. Bell, F.S.A.	J. Banks Stanhope
E.W. Brooks	H.R. Tedder, F.S.A.
Percy Carpenter	W.J. Thoms, F.S.A.
James Christie	H. Vaughan, F.S.A.
G.T. Clark, F.S.A.	H.E. Ward
Edward Cock	C. Knight Watson, M.A., F.S.A.
Charles Collambell	H.T. Wells, R.A.
Messrs. P. Colnaghi & Co.	Thomas H. Woods
Sidney Colvin, M.A.	Philip Worsley
Robert F. Cooke	Richard Wosley
J. Gibson Graig	

**Appendix V: George Scharf to Philip Stanhope (draft), 10 Apr. 1871, papers relating to 109<sup>th</sup> Trustees meeting, 9 May 1871, uncatalogued material, HAL.**

[Alongside the deletions shown below, some of this draft text is side-lined or circled]

8 Ashley Place, S.W.  
10<sup>th</sup> April 1871.

My dear Lord

I remained at the N.P.G. till 6'oclock today and am thankful to be able to report a very good Field day. The total number of visitors who came directly into our Gallery, and quite irrespective of the other parts of the Kensington Museum, was 3291. Last Easter Monday, a still brighter day in point of weather, brought us 2201. People enquired anxiously at the main entrance the way to the portraits. Portraits certainly seem to be peculiarly suited to the English taste. They like facts, whenever the narrator looks like he could be relied on. The public came in large numbers very early, & the policeman told me that he found people

waiting to be let in at the doors before 10'oclock the usual time of opening. It was not found necessary to let people out by the extreme west end. Visitors returned the whole length of the Gallery to regain the eastern staircase and thereby ~~regain~~ entre the Meyrick collection. It was however absolutely necessary to station an extra Police Constable and Darbon one of our attendants at the extremities of the gangway so as to regulate the traffic and to prevent persons from standing at the corners & impeding the current. Smith & our usual Police Constable were moving backwards and forwards, patrolling, all day through. Smith reports that he frequently had to check persons from putting their fingers on the pictures and tablets. Men pointing with the sharp end of their umbrellas and lads with switches occasionally seemed to place the pictures in great peril; but fortunately no accident happened. The abundance of orangepeel nutshells and pieces of paper that strewed the floor during the latter part of the day was very different from anything we experienced in Gt. George Street. A very large proportion of the visitors were women, & most of them had babies in their arms. The great picture of the House of Commons proved a source of very great attraction & it was very interesting to see how diligently these casual visitors sought out the great political characters of the day & how delighted they were when they found that their surmises were confirmed by the Key-plates. The newly acquired picture of Sir Walter Scott has always proved a great success. There was a little crowd in that corner to look at it all day long. ~~Someone exclaimed "and who is that old gentleman reading the newspaper with all his things about him? — Why it's Sir Walter Scott". and then they began to read the tablet and who went through with it identifying each article depicted on the panel.~~ Dr Jenner although now placed high and in an unfavourable light did not escape frequent observation. A woman pointing to it said to her girls "Here's the one that's making such a lot of children suffer now for vaccination". Another said there's the vaccinating man. Some ladies said of the former picture "Here's Walter Scott at Home". The long case of Autograph Specimens proved the most attractive of all. Young people were puzzled and some of the elder tried to decipher them. The Royal signatures were more easily followed. Lord Lovet seemed to attract a good deal of notice. Shakespeare's portraits and the autographs being placed very near together induced people to look from one to the other. The same was the case with Queen Elizabeth and King James 1<sup>st</sup>.

The written labels seem more than ever acceptable to the class of people who attend the Gallery today. They like that kind of ready information [annotation in Stanhope's hand: 'as distinguished from elaborate catalogue']. I conversed with several persons who seemed more than ordinarily attentive. One roughly dressed man surprised me by reading the older specimens of handwriting to his daughter. I found out later that he was a journeyman printer. Another an ivory turner with his three sons spoke with great enthusiasm of his "good sense kind of recreation" and it was a "sad mistake for people to make speeches & think that they know everything better than anybody else".

Altogether the day has proved very satisfactory no less in point of numbers than for the good demeanour of every one that passed the entrance. Although the gangways are so very narrow there was no observable instance of pushing or loss of temper. The men placed at the extremities regulated matters where the chief danger lay. I feel however convinced that it might have been very different if the entire numbers who came to the building had of necessity passed though our Gallery. Many people who sought the Naval collections & specimens of Machinery passed on at once in that direction on the ground floor and we thereby may have escaped some useless numbers.

I have the honour to be, My Lord,  
your most obedt. servant  
George Scharf

## Illustrations



**Fig. 1:** Sir George Scharf, by Ernest Edwards, albumen carte-de-visite, 1866, NPG Ax29985. ©National Portrait Gallery, London. This photograph shows Scharf posed with one of his sketchbooks, as if poised to make a record of the small portrait he holds, marking the centrality of this method of documentation to his work.



**Fig. 2:** George Scharf, sketch after a portrait offered as Queen Henrietta Maria in 1876, TSB 24, NPG7/1/3/1/2/22, p.41, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.







**Fig. 4:** Sir George Scharf, by John James Fisher, albumen cabinet card, 1889, NPG x22540. ©National Portrait Gallery, London. This photograph shows Scharf posed in Brooks's studio in Kensington, with the painting [NPG 1833] in the background. The artist used this image for reference when inserting Scharf into the composite group scene.





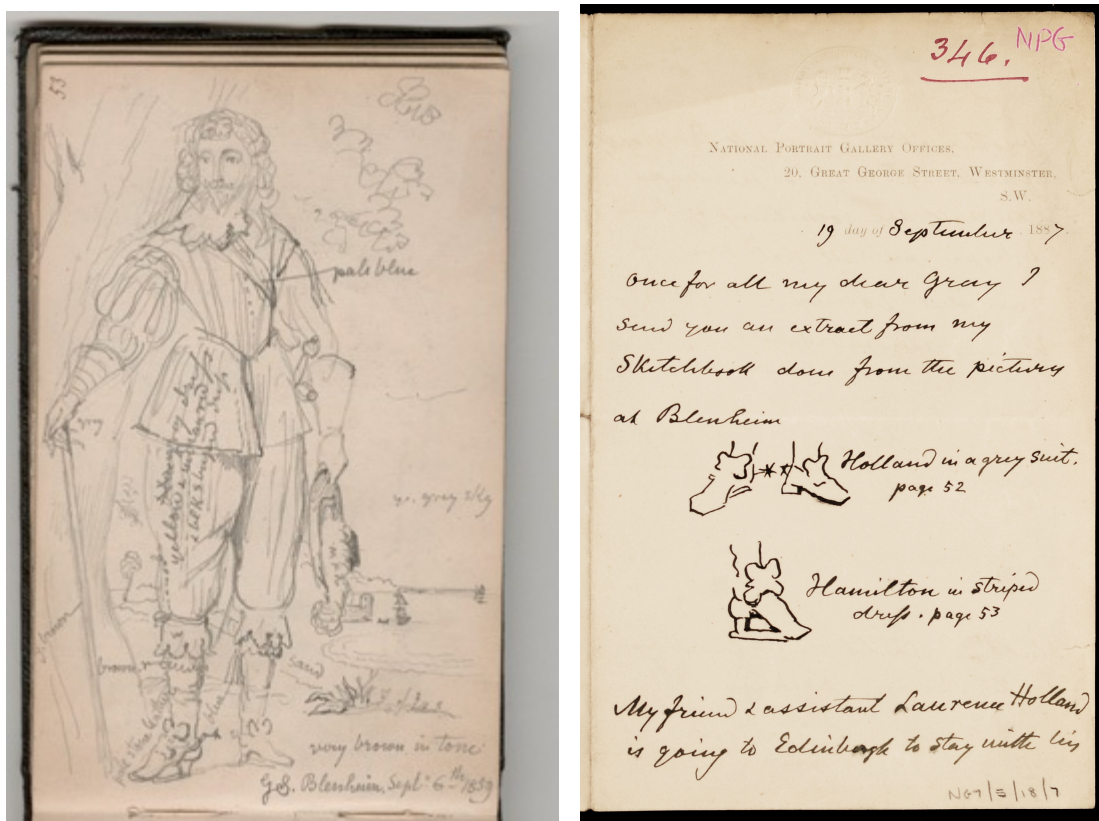
**Fig. 5:** George Scharf, sketch after a portrait of Horace Vere, Baron Vere of Tilbury [NPG 818], 1889, TSB 24, NPG7/1/3/1/2/31, p.31, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 6:** George Scharf, sketch after a portrait of Joseph Addison in the style of Godfrey Kneller, 1859, TSB 3, NPG7/1/3/1/2/3, p.24, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London. This type of Addison portrait is presumably what Scharf refers to as the 'Kit-Cat' in his letter to William Smith (quoted).



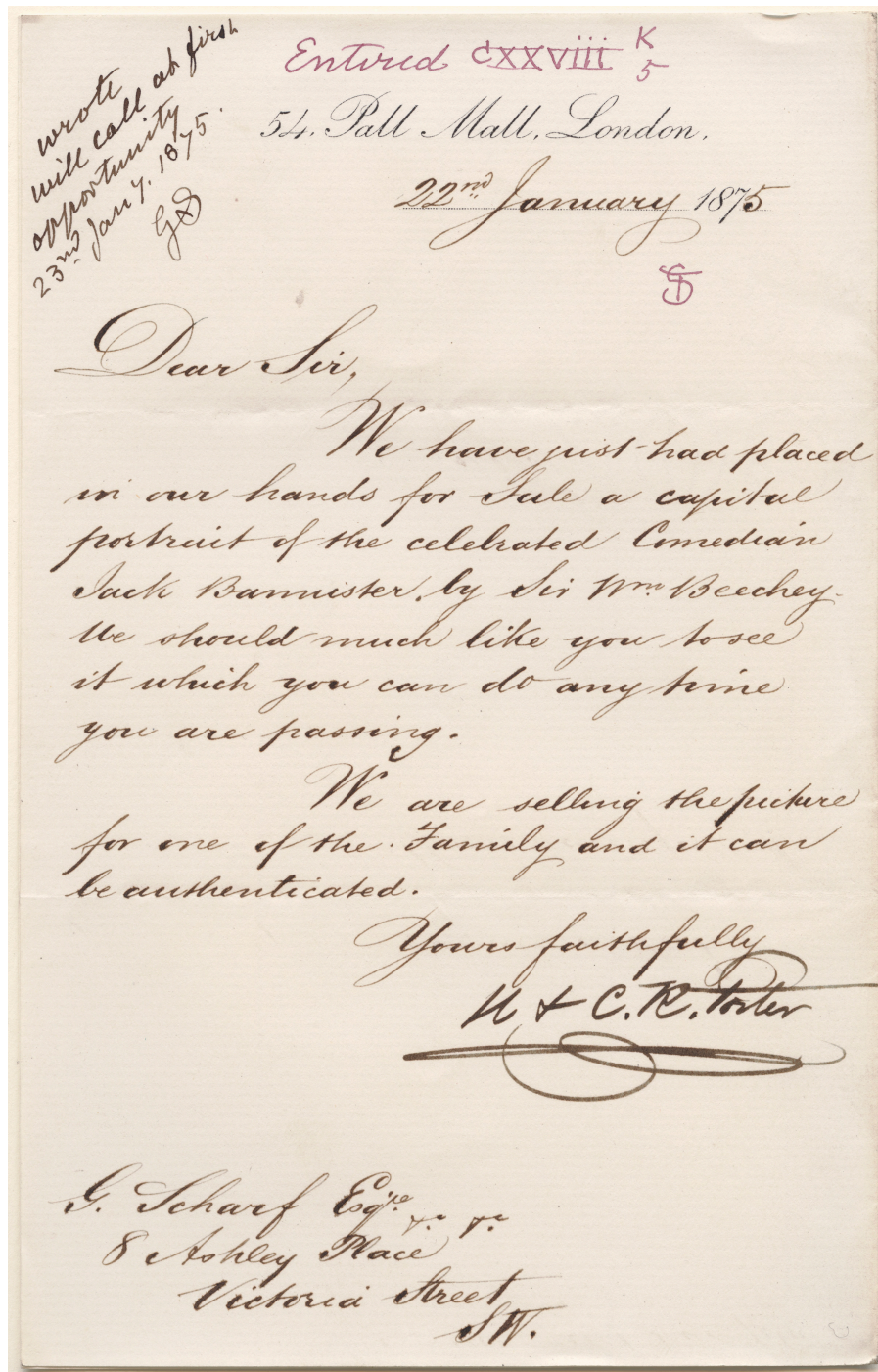
**Figs. 7 & 7a:** George Scharf, sketch after a portrait offered as Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne by Peter Paul Rubens, 1861, TSB 6, NPG7/1/3/1/2/6, p.43, HAL; and sketch after the preparatory drawing by Rubens in the British Museum (BM 1860,0616.36), NPG7/1/3/1/2/6, p.41, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.







**Fig. 9:** George Scharf, sketch of a portrait of *Gonzalo de Córdoba* at Montreal House, Kent, with photograph of the picture pasted in alongside, 1861, SSB 55a, NPG7/3/4/2/66, p.58, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 10:** Letter from H. & C. Foster, 54 Pall Mall, offering a portrait of comedian Jack Bannister by Sir William Beechey, cross-referenced to the 128<sup>th</sup> Trustees' meeting and the corresponding entry in the Register of Offers. Scharf's symbol 'To Call and See' (top right) signifies a further entry in his appointments volume of the same name, relating to this portrait (NPG7/1/2/1/1/1, p.161, HAL); papers relating to 128<sup>th</sup> Trustees meeting, 8 Feb. 1875, uncatalogued material, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



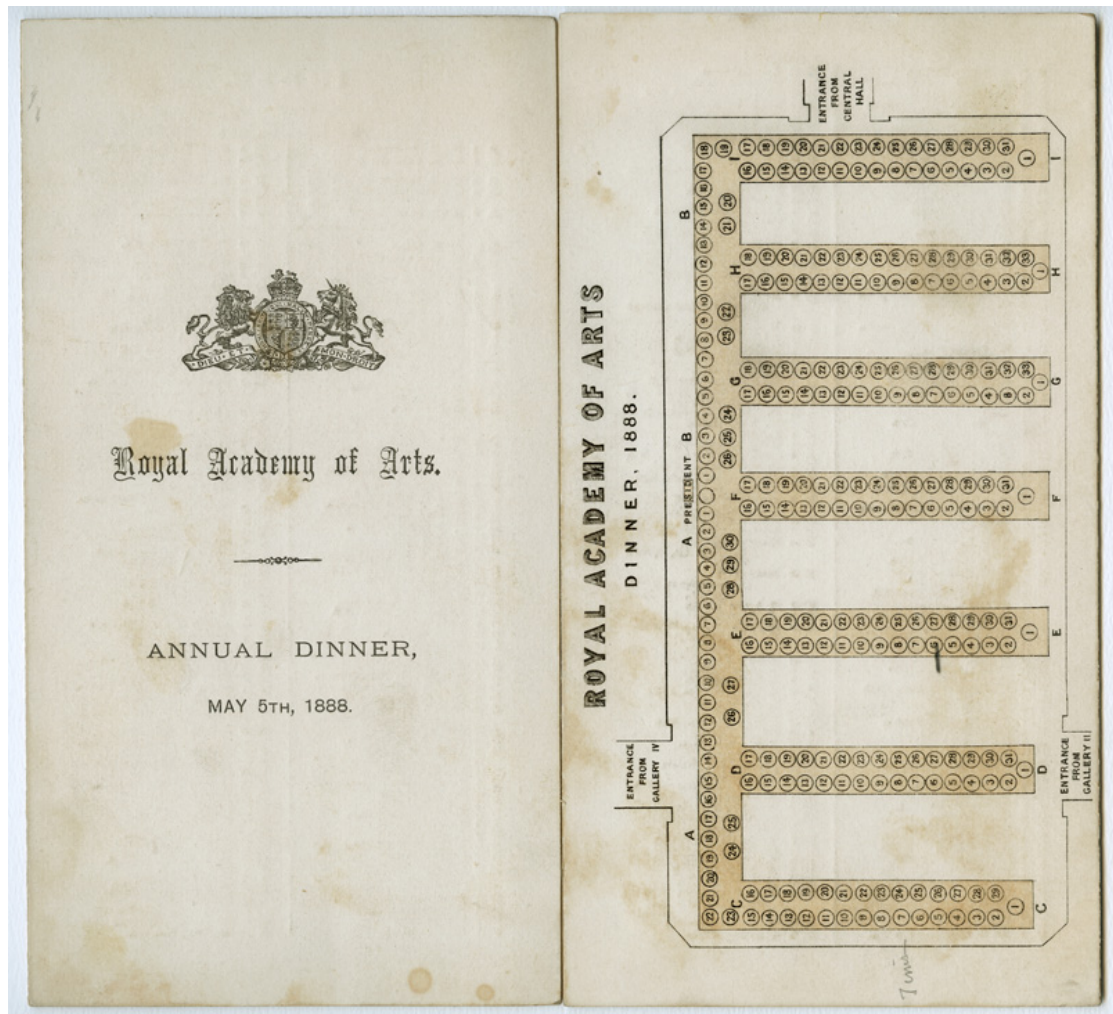
**Fig. 11:** George Scharf, sketch of the meeting room of the Society of Antiquaries at Somerset House, pencil, 1874, BM 1900,0725.138-181. ©The Trustees of the British Museum. Scharf has included the position of the portraits on the walls, annotated with the names of the sitters.



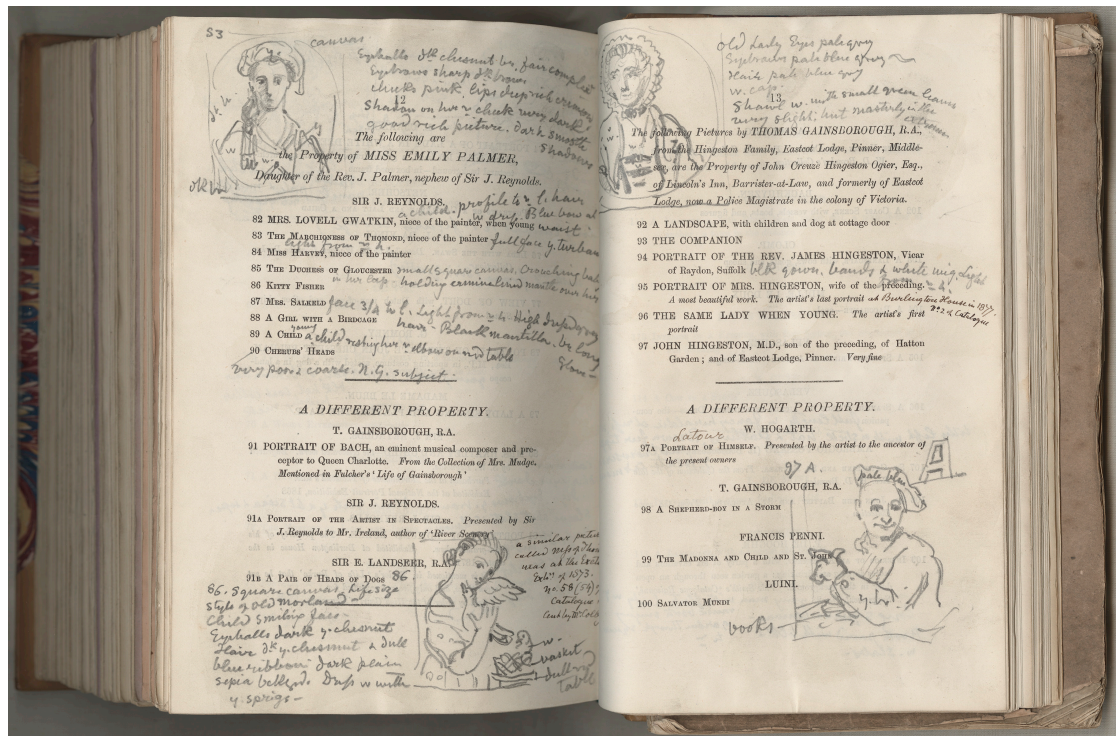


**Fig. 12:** *The Royal Academy Conversazione*, 1891, by George Henry Grenville Manton, pen, ink and gouache, 1891, NPG 2820. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 13:** George Scharf's seating plan card for Royal Academy banquet in 1888 with his position, not far from the President's chair, marked in pencil, NPG7/3/6/7, HAL.  
©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 14:** Sketches and notes by George Scharf in his catalogue for a sale of 'Ancient & Modern Pictures' at Christie's, 4 Jul. 1874, SL, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London. These include sketches of portraits sold as Kitty Fisher after Sir Joshua Reynolds, and William Hogarth by himself.



**Fig. 15:** *The Somerset House Conference, 1604*, by unknown artist, oil on canvas, 1604, NPG 665. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 16:** Sir William Agnew, 1st Bt, by Francis Montague ('Frank') Holl, oil on canvas, 1883, NPG 6991. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

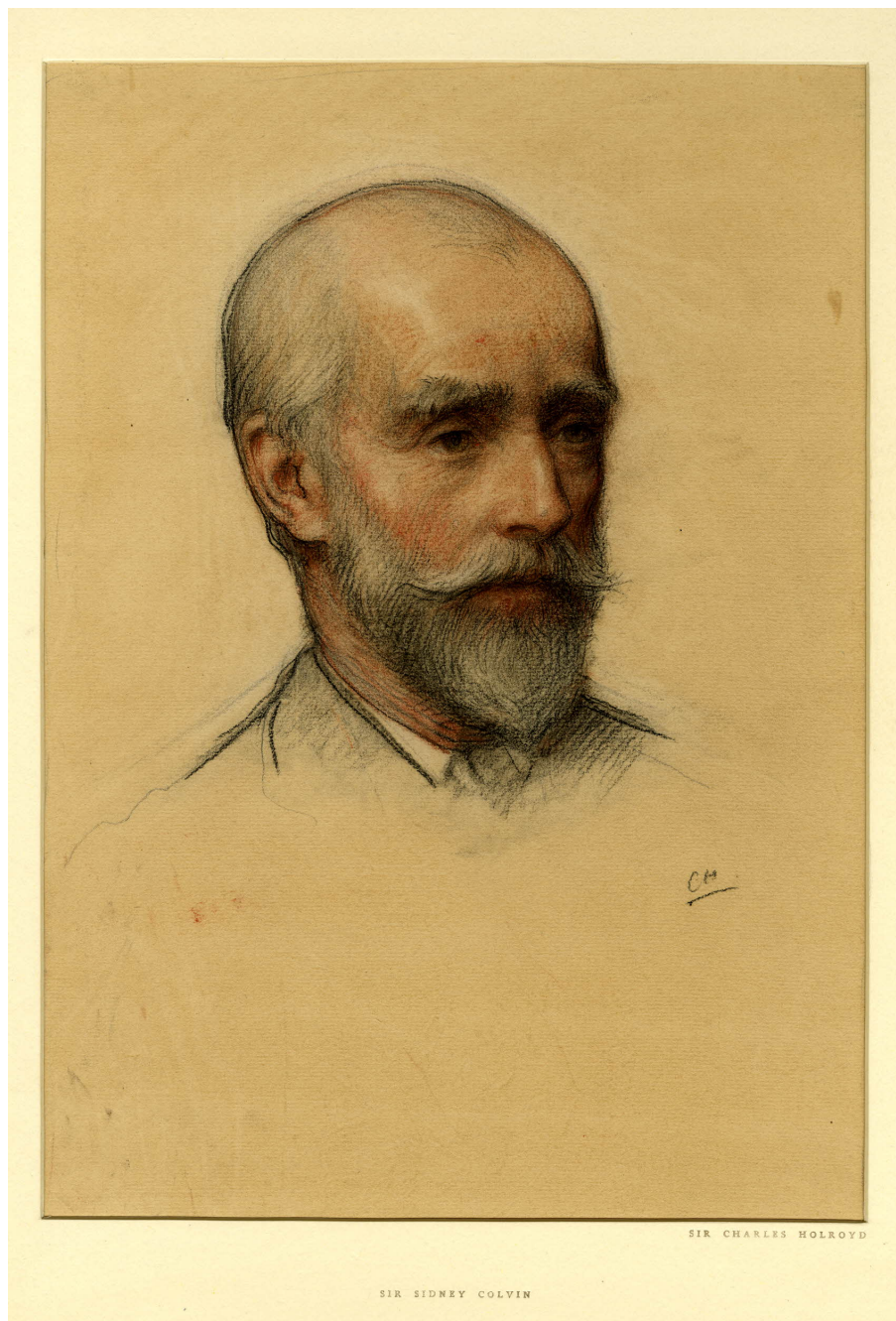


**Fig. 17:** George Romney, by George Romney, oil on canvas, 1784, NPG 959. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

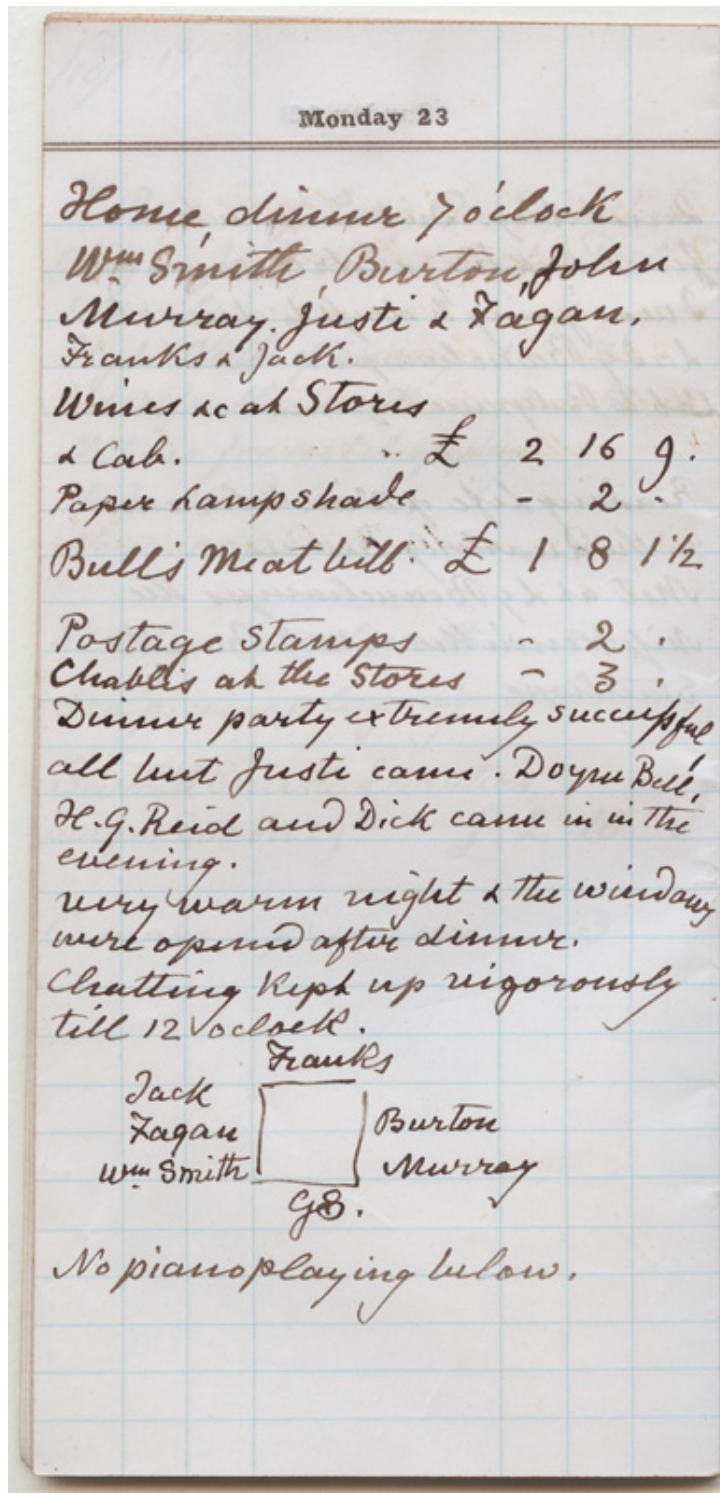


**Fig. 18:** John Russell, 4th Duke of Bedford, by Thomas Gainsborough, oil on canvas, feigned oval, c. 1770, NPG 755. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 19:** Sir Sidney Colvin, by Sir Charles Holroyd, chalk, c.1900, BM 1939,0311.2. ©The Trustees of the British Museum.

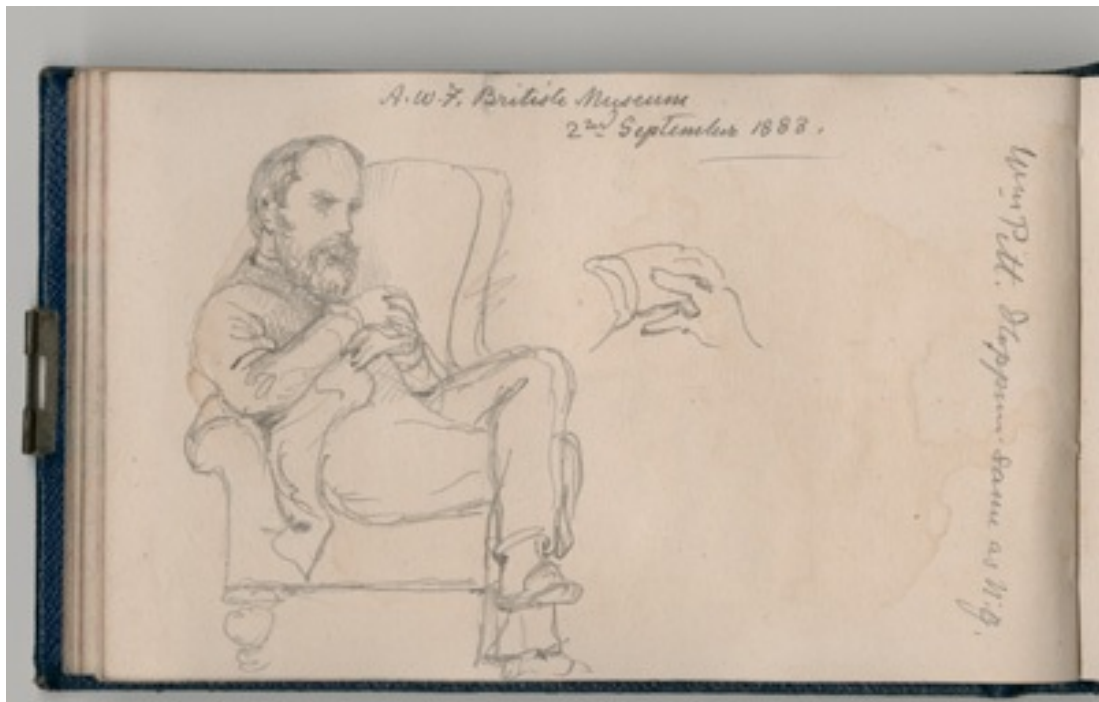


**Fig. 20:** George Scharf, page from his personal diary, 23 Mar. 1874, NPG7/3/1/31, HAL.  
 ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 21:** *An evening at 8 Ashley Place, London, 19<sup>th</sup> January 1873*, by George Scharf, lithograph, 1873, NPG D6712. ©National Portrait Gallery, London. Scharf sketched this image on a lithographic stone, by gas-light in his library. Franks is shown second from left (Scharf far right).



**Fig. 22:** Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, by George Scharf, pencil, 1883, NPG7/1/3/1/2/26, p.56, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London. Scharf sketched this picture of his friend whilst staying with Franks at the British Museum on 2 Sep. 1883.



**Fig. 23:** Sir Frederic William Burton, by Cundall, Downes & Co. or by John Watkins, albumen carte-de-visite, c.1863, NPG Ax5077. ©National Portrait Gallery, London. Scharf owned this carte, which was inscribed on the reverse 'To G.S with friendliest greetings from F.W.B, Sept 5<sup>th</sup> 1863'.





**Fig. 24:** King Henry VII, by unknown Netherlandish artist, oil on panel, 1505, purchased 1876, NPG 416. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 25:** Charles Stewart Hardinge and Frederic William Burton, sketch by George Scharf, in the 'Rock Garden' at South Park, Hardinge's home in Kent, 1882, NPG7/3/4/2/119, p.47, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 26:** *The Ambassadors*, by Hans Holbein the Younger, oil on oak, 1533, NG 1314. © The National Gallery, London.



**Fig. 27:** John Miller Gray, by Patrick William Adam, oil on canvas board, 1885, PG 1226.  
© Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.



**Fig. 28:** George Scharf, sketch of the new Scottish National Portrait Gallery building on Queen Street, Edinburgh, 1887, NPG7/1/3/1/2/30, p.14, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London. This drawing also shows the Gallery's temporary single-storey premises, on the left hand side.

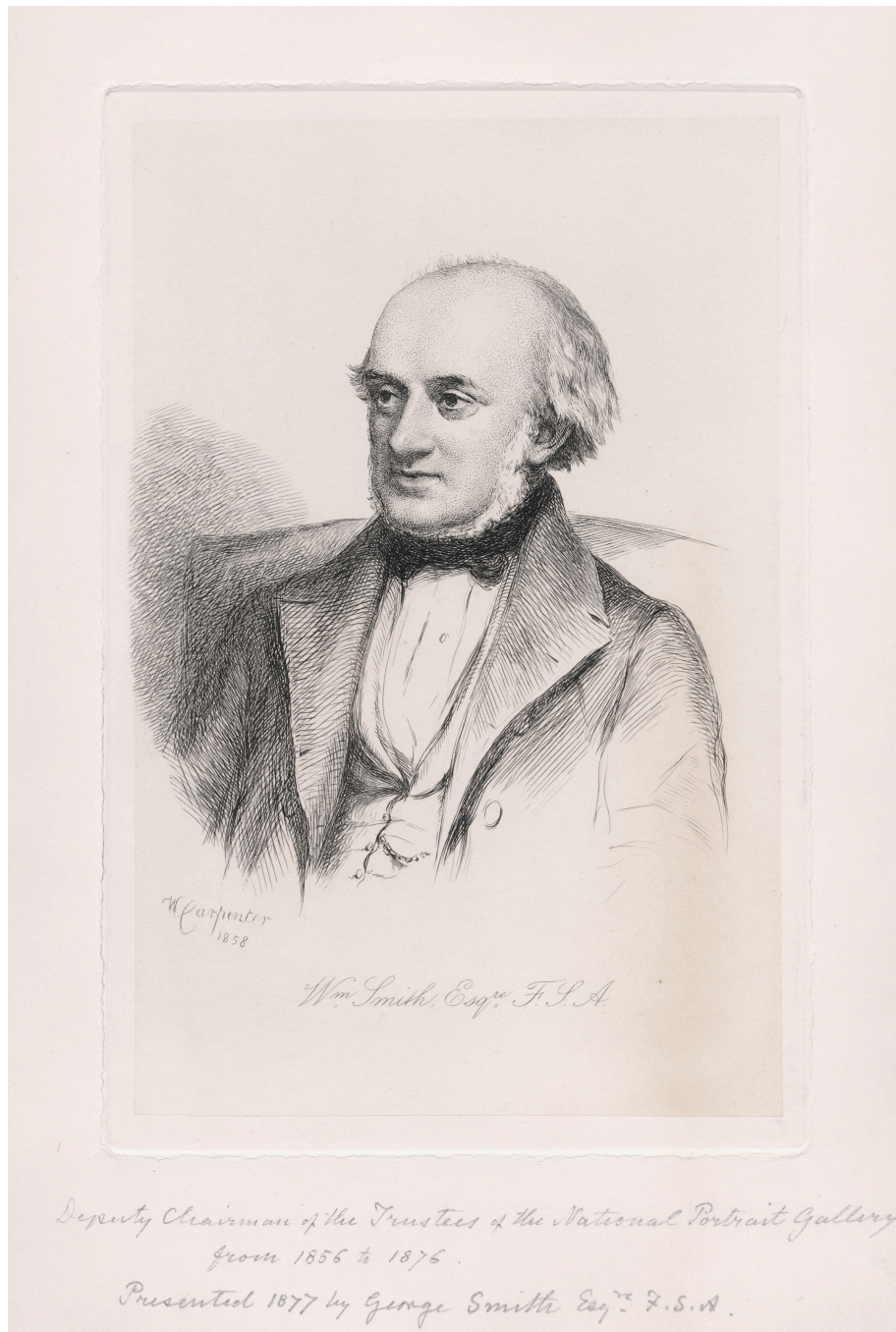






**Fig. 30:** William Hookham Carpenter, by Caldesi, Blanford & Co, albumen carte-de-visite, inscribed by Scharf on the verso 1862, NPG Ax5090. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 31:** William Smith, by William Hookham Carpenter, after Margaret Sarah Carpenter (née Geddes), etching, 1858, NPG D18604. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 32:** George Scharf, sketch after a portrait offered as Mary Queen of Scots in 1860, TSB 4, NPG7/1/3/1/2/4, p.65A, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 33:** Philip Stanhope, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl Stanhope by (George) Herbert Watkins, albumen print, arched top, 1857, NPGP301(7). ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

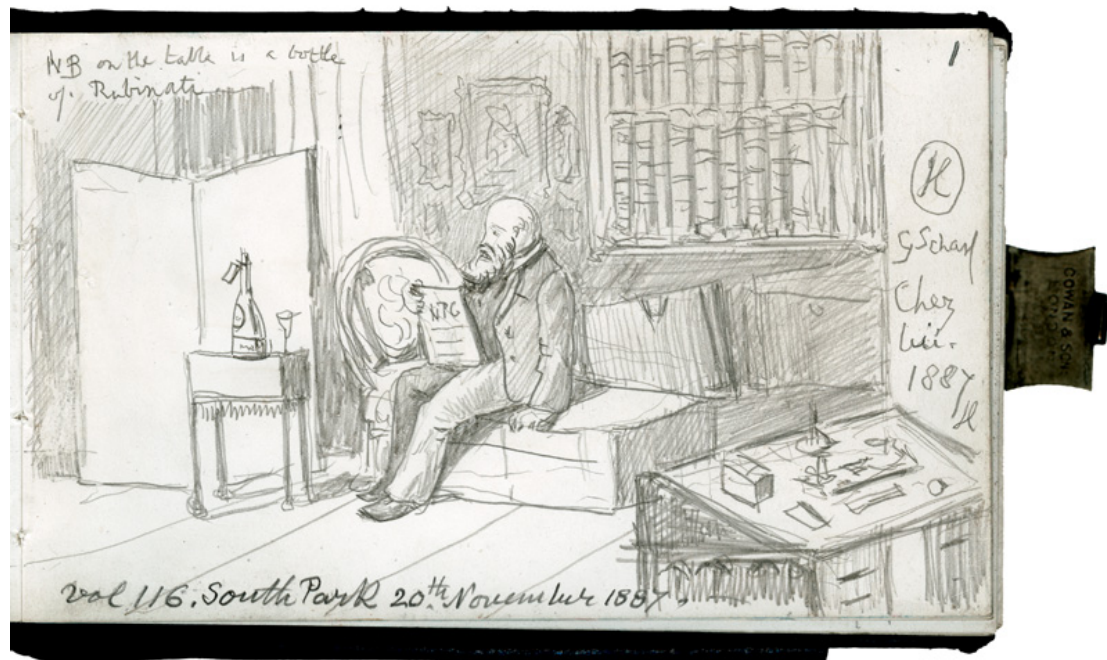




**Fig. 34:** Philip Stanhope, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl Stanhope, by George Scharf, pencil and ink on paper, 1876, BM, 1900,0725.6. ©The Trustees of the British Museum.

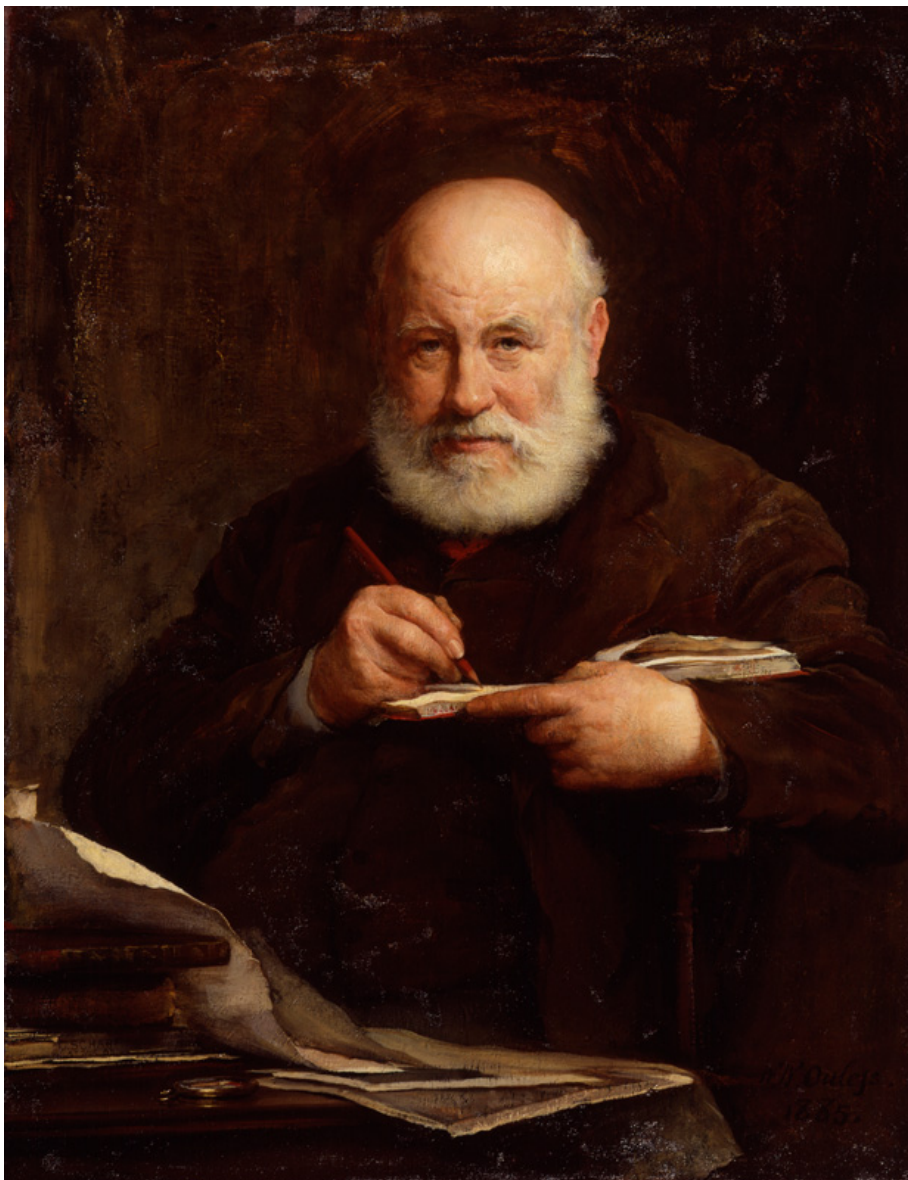


**Fig. 35:** Charles Stewart Hardinge, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Hardinge of Lahore, by George Scharf, pencil, 1887, SSB 116, NPG7/3/4/2/131, p.5, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 36:** George Scharf, by Charles Stewart Hardinge, pencil, 1887, SSB 116, NPG7/3/4/2/131, p.1, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 37:** Sir George Scharf, by Walter William Oules, oil on canvas, 1885, NPG 985.  
©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 38:** Thomas Greene (previously identified as William Cowper), by George Romney, oil on canvas, 1762–3, NPG 972. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

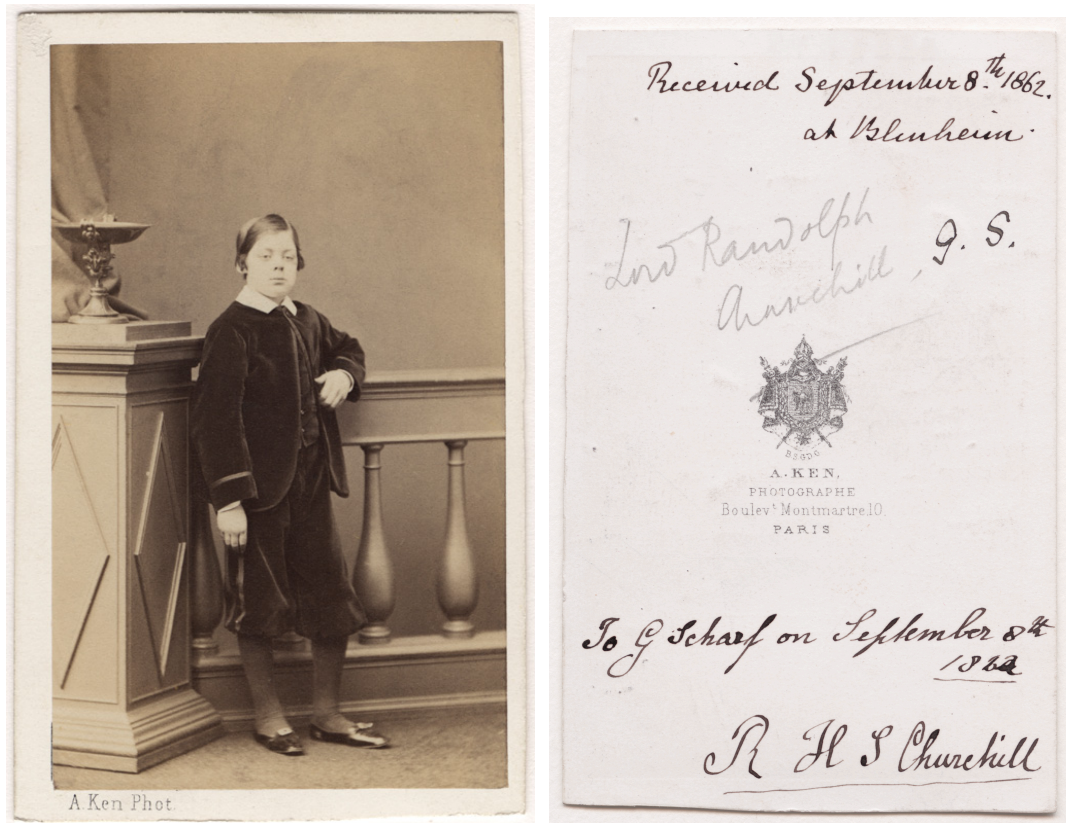


**Fig. 39:** William Pleydell-Bouverie, 5th Earl of Radnor, by George Scharf, pencil, 1890, sketched at Longford Castle in September 1890, SSB 122, NPG7/3/4/2/137, p.41, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

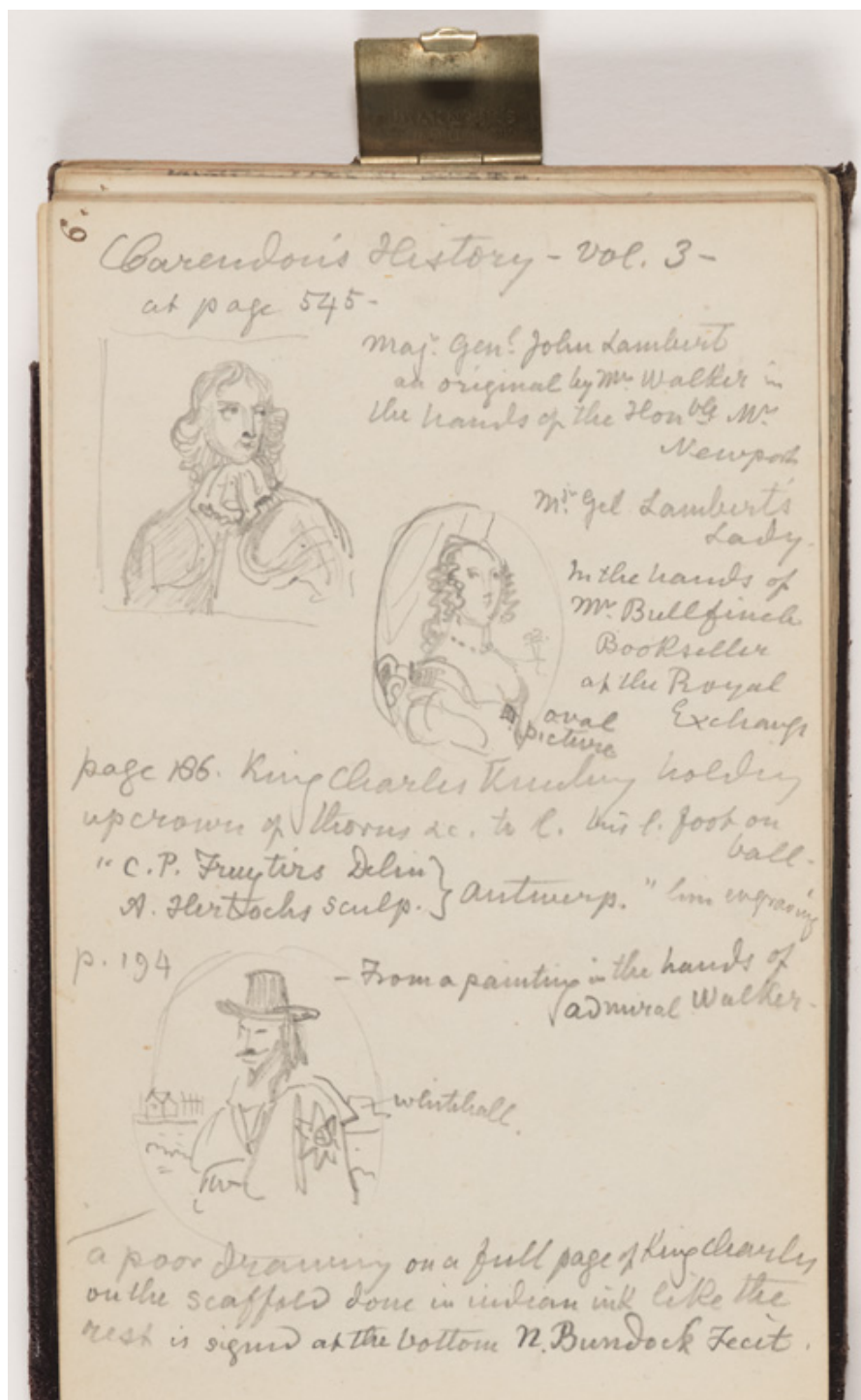




**Fig. 40:** The 7th Duke of Marlborough and his family (outside Blenheim Palace), by Hills & Saunders, albumen carte-de-visite, c.1864, NPG Ax29663. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Figs. 41 & 41a:** Lord Randolph Churchill, by Alexandre Ken, albumen carte-de-visite, c.1862, NPG Ax5098; and verso. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

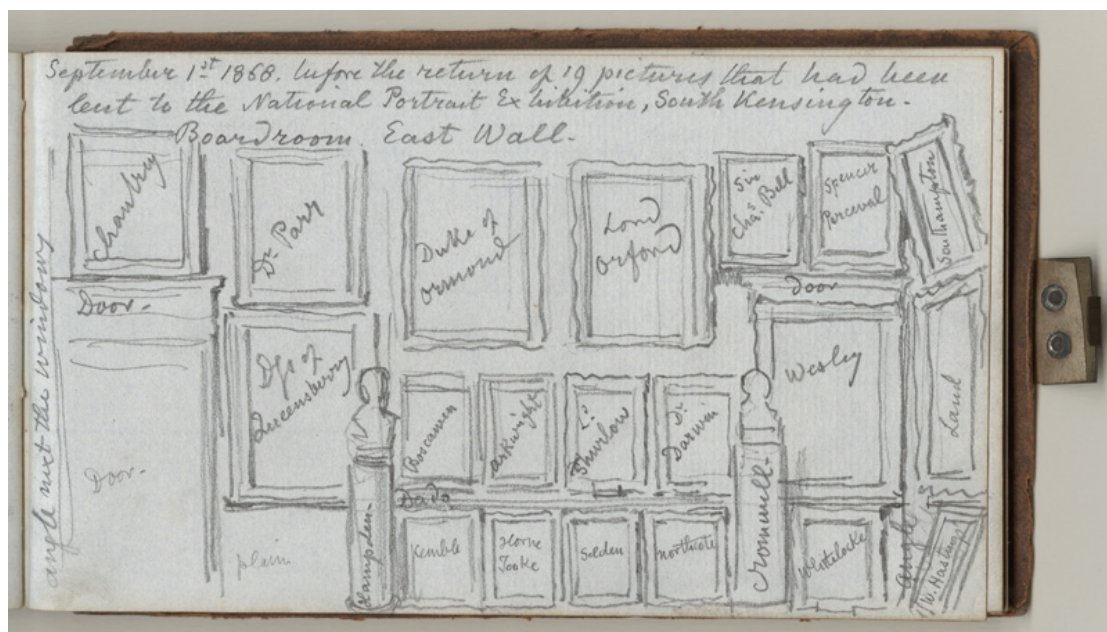


**Fig. 42:** George Scharf, sketches and notes taken from Clarendon's *History* at Blenheim Palace, 1867–8, SSB 80, NPG7/3/4/2/91, p.6, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



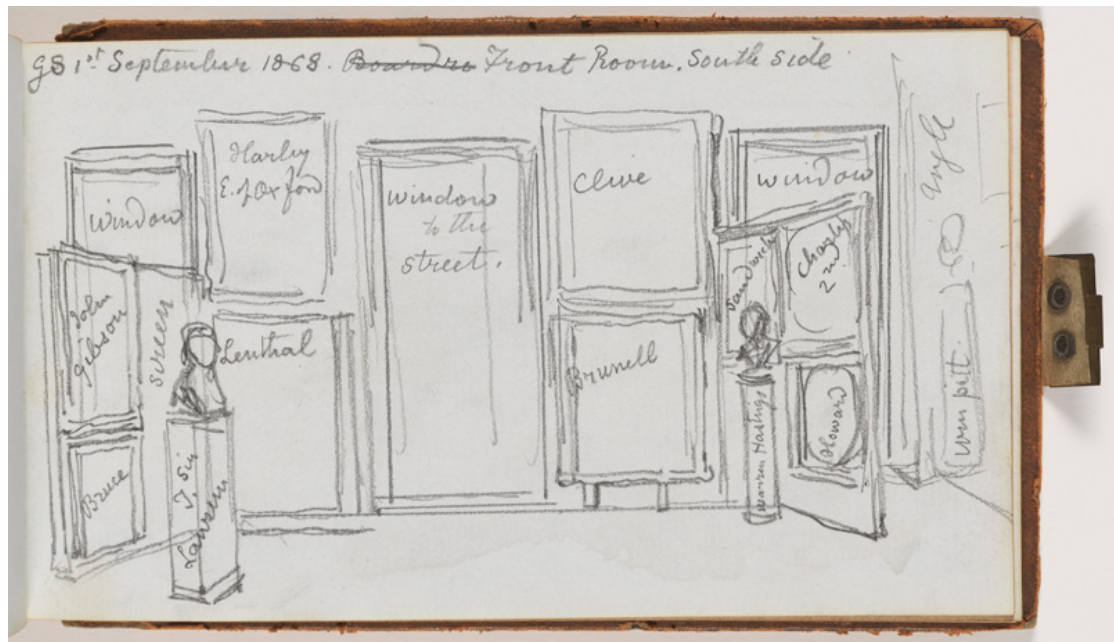


**Fig. 43:** George Scharf, sketch of the west and north walls of the grand staircase, Great George Street, showing the dense hang of pictures, 1866, NPG66/1/2/1, HAL.  
©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 44:** George Scharf, sketch of the east wall of the Boardroom, Great George Street, 1868, NPG66/1/2/1, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 45:** George Scharf, sketch of the Front Room, south side, Great George Street, including picture screens, 1868, NPG66/1/2/1, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Figs. 46 & 46a:** George Scharf, sketches showing the cramped display of portraits in the first floor waiting room and above a doorway, 1869, SSB 84, NPG7/3/4/2/95, pp.61&2, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

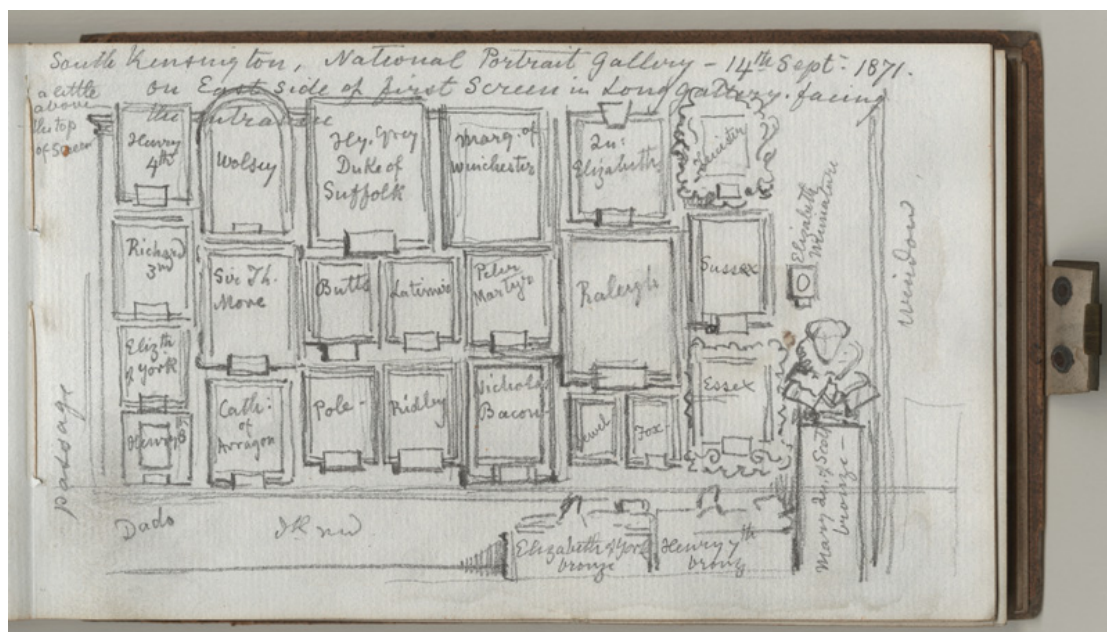


**Fig. 47:** George Scharf, the National Portrait Gallery at South Kensington facing Exhibition road, watercolour, 1885, NPG 2747c. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 48:** George Scharf, preparatory sketch for the arrangement of portraits at South Kensington, 1870, NPG66/2/2/2 (R1), HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

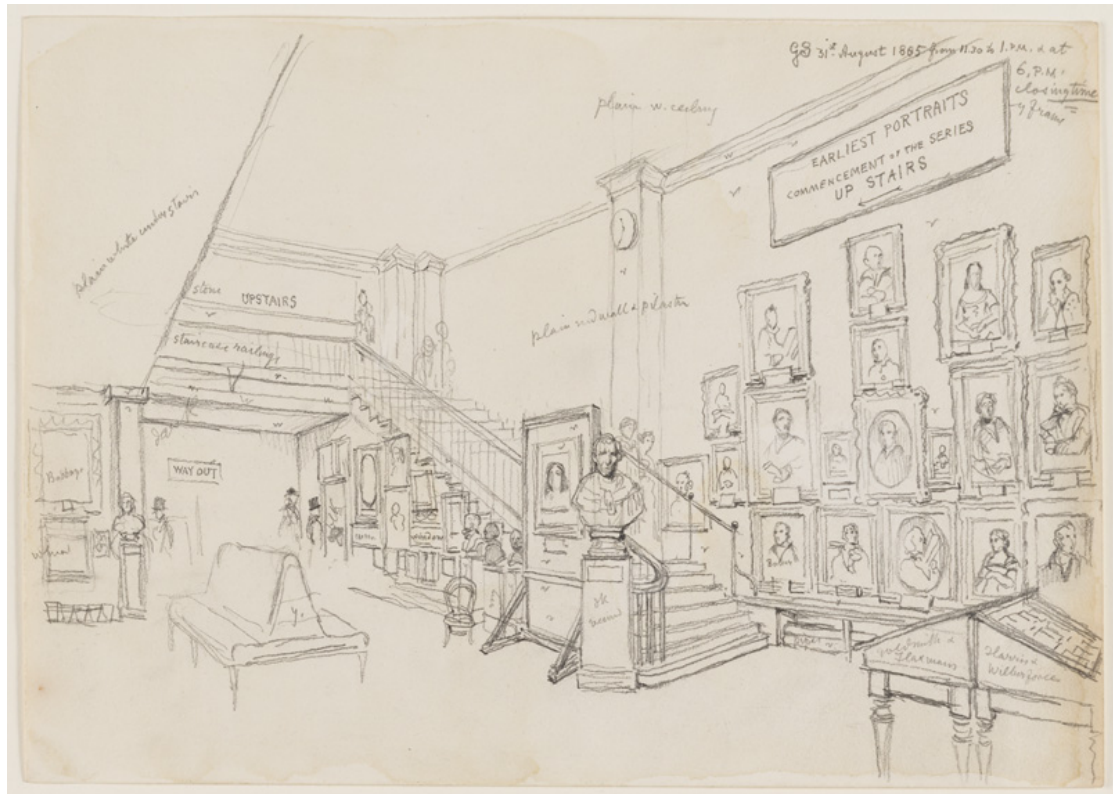




**Fig. 49:** George Scharf, sketch of the east side of the first screen in the Long Gallery at South Kensington, 1871, NPG66/2/2/3, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 50:** George Scharf, sketch of portraits on the outer wall of Saloon D at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857, NPG7/3/4/2/59, p.26, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 51:** George Scharf, sketch of the gallery on the ground floor at South Kensington, with staircase, 1885, NPG66/2/2/8/12, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

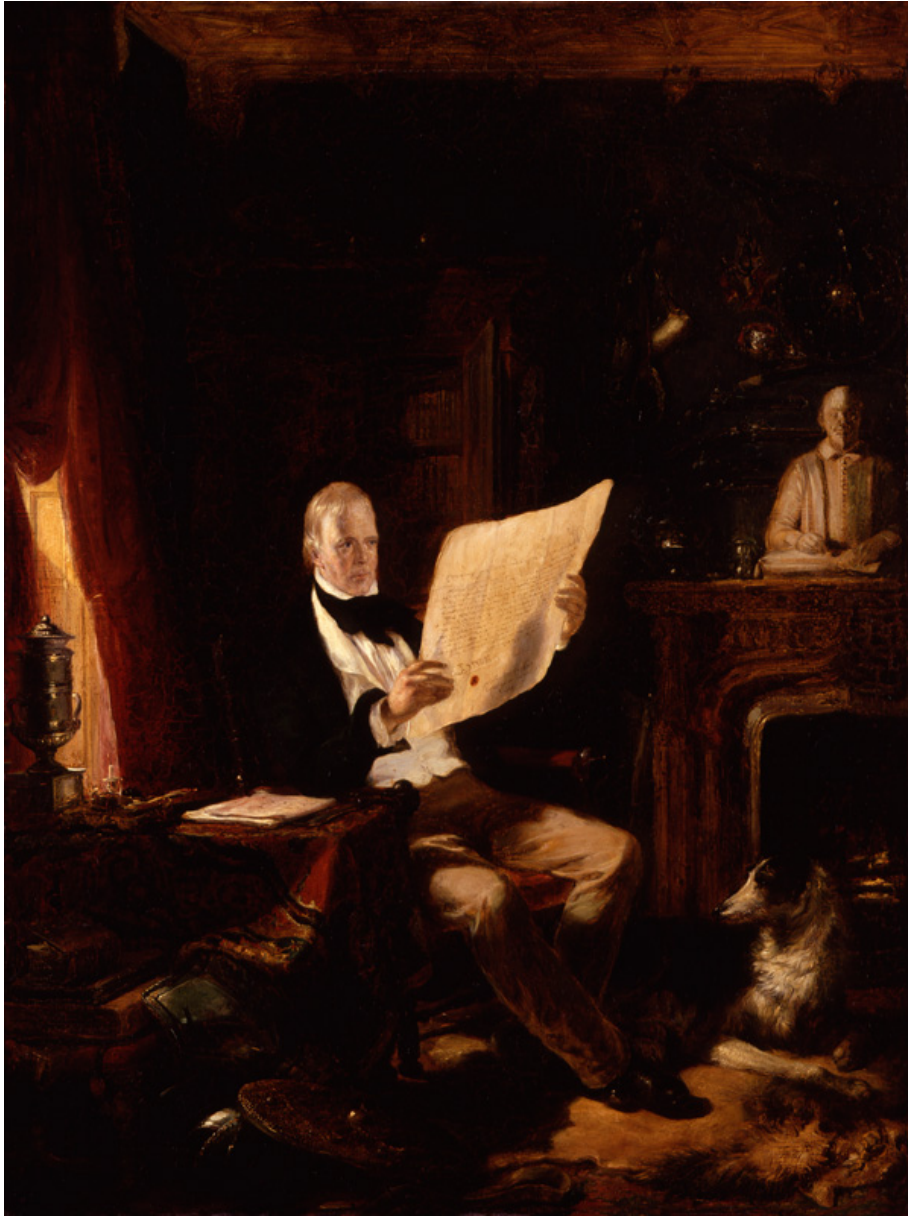


**Fig. 52:** Photograph by Charles Praetorius and Wood & Co. of the hang at South Kensington, 1885, including portraits of Mary Somerville to left [NPG 690] and the Duke of Wellington [NPG 405] to right hand side, NPG22/2/1, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 53:** George Scharf, drawing showing portraits of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort facing the entrance vestibule at South Kensington, watercolour, 1885, NPG 2747b. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

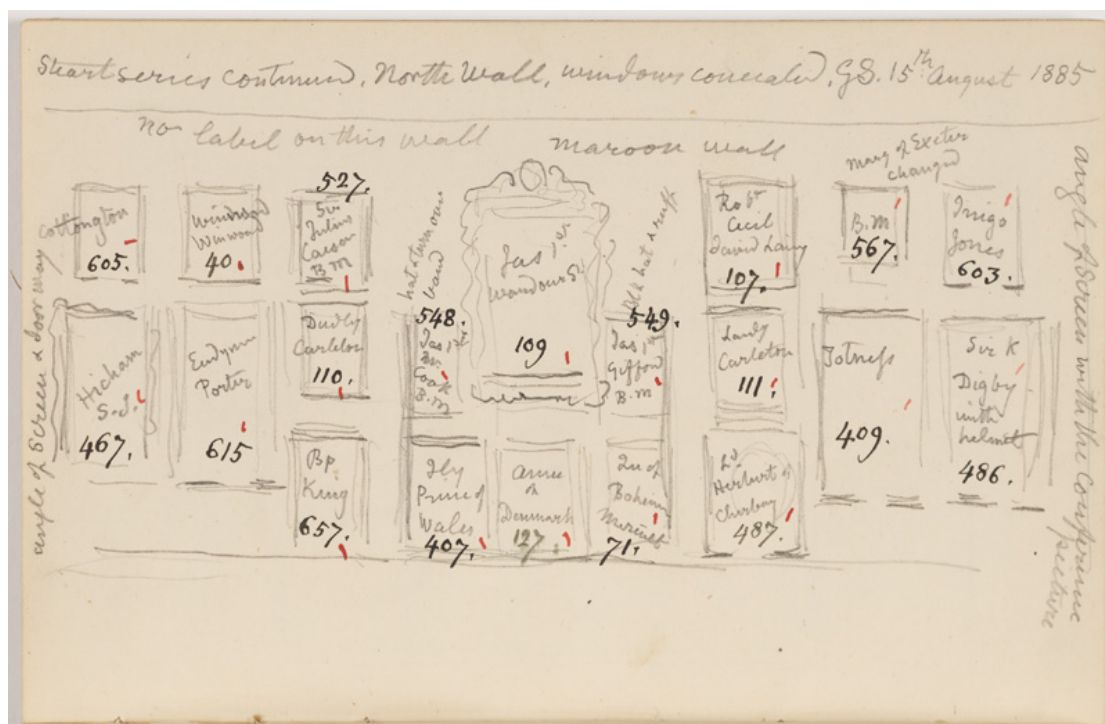


**Fig. 54:** Sir Walter Scott, 1<sup>st</sup> Bt, by Sir William Allan, oil on board, 1831, NPG 321.  
©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 55:** Photograph by Walker & Boutall (Emery Walker) showing the collection at the Bethnal Green Museum, 1895, NPG22/2/2, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 56:** George Scharf, 'Wall Map Lists, Pt. 1', 1885, showing some of the 'Stuart series' portraits in the upper gallery at South Kensington, NPG66/2/2/6, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 57:** Photograph by Walker & Boutall (Emery Walker) showing the portrait screens at the Bethnal Green Museum, 1895, NPG22/2/2, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 58:** George Scharf, drawing of the upper Long Gallery at South Kensington, watercolour, 1885, NPG 2747a. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 59:** Photograph by Charles Praetorius and Wood & Co. of the hang at South Kensington, 1885, showing the north wall in the second compartment of the upper gallery, NPG22/2/1, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

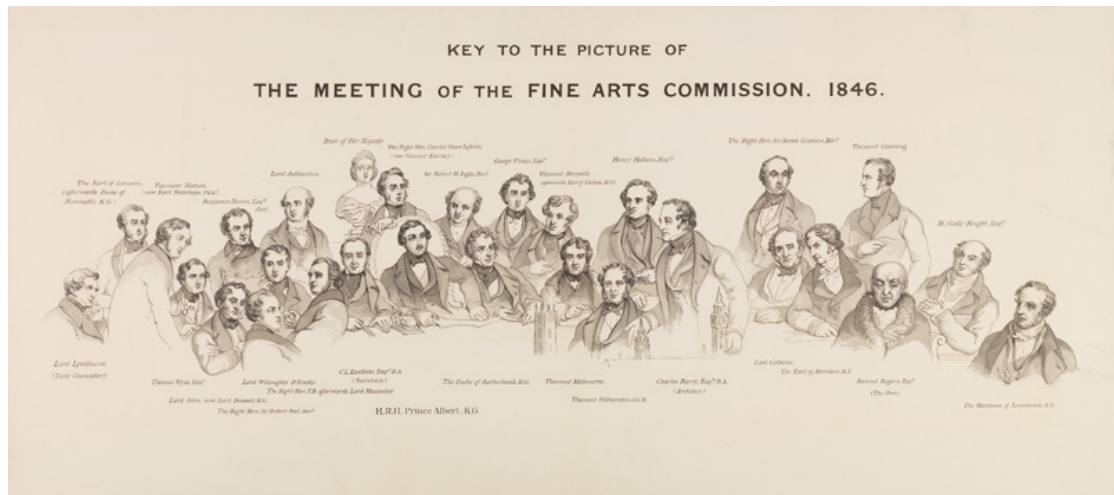


**Fig. 60:** George Scharf, sketch of the Front Room at Great George Street, 1865, NPG66/1/2/1, HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Figs. 61 & 61a:** William Shakespeare, associated with John Taylor, oil on canvas, feigned oval, circa 1600-1610, NPG 1; and William Shakespeare, after Gerard Johnson, plaster cast of copy of head of effigy at Stratford-upon-Avon, c.1620, NPG 185a. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 62:** Key to *The Fine Arts Commissioners, 1846*, by George Scharf, pen, ink and wash, 1872, NPG 343c. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

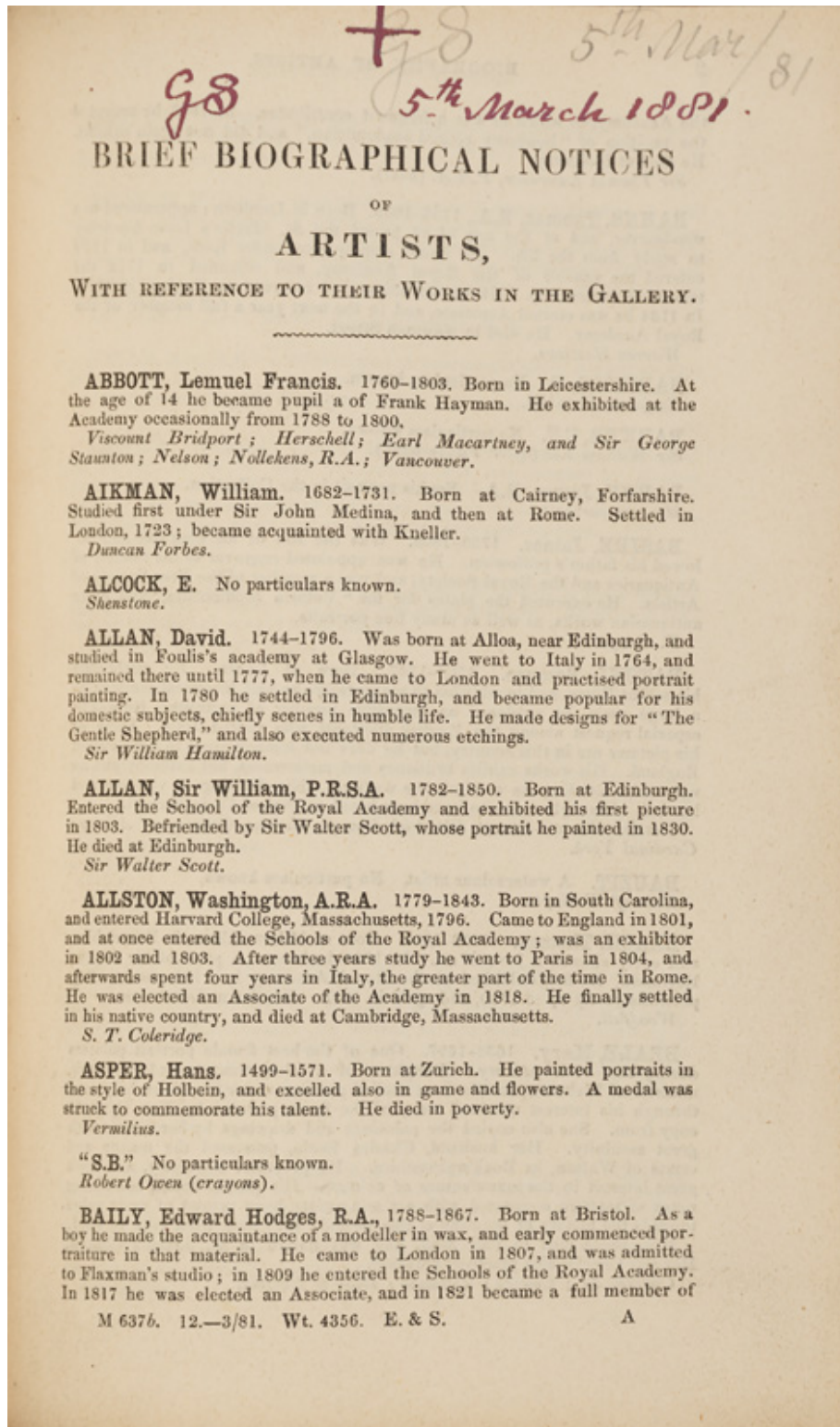


**Fig. 63:** *The House of Commons, 1833*, by Sir George Hayter, oil on canvas, 1833–1843, NPG 54. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

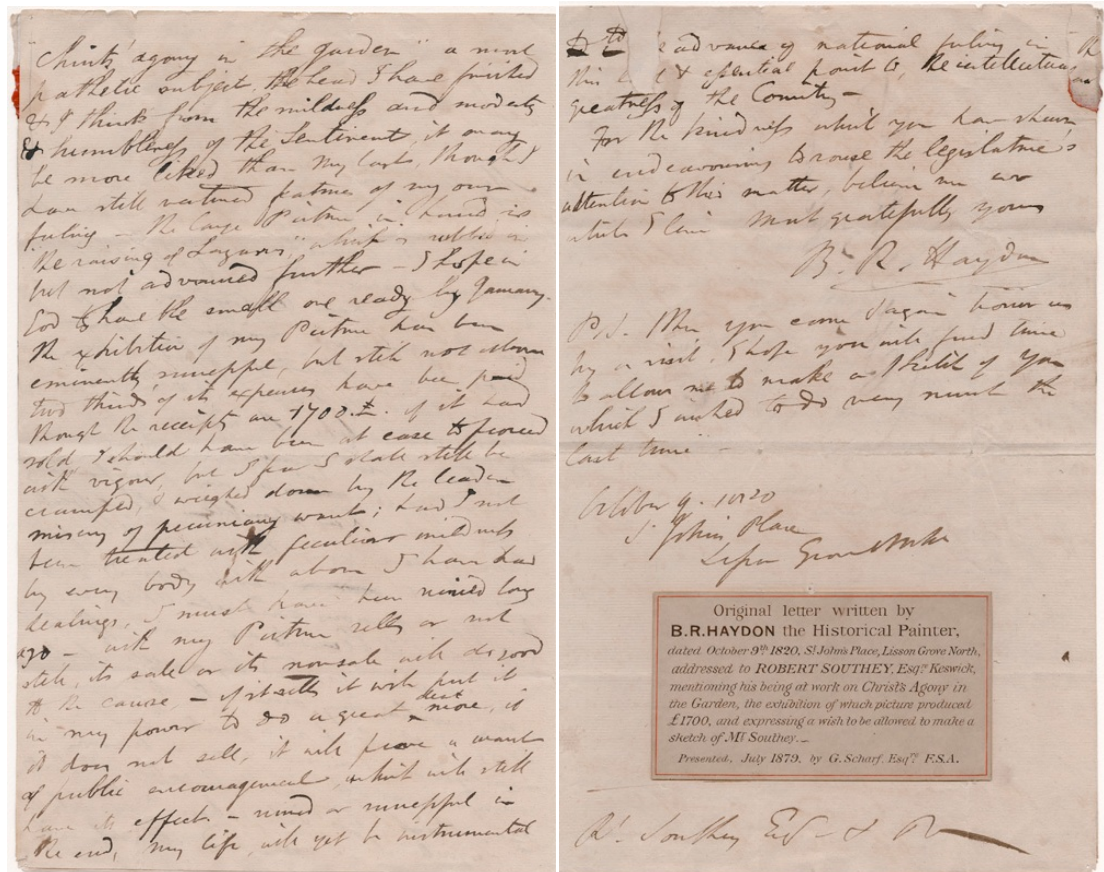


**Fig. 64:** Charles Babbage, by Samuel Laurence, oil on canvas, 1845, NPG 414.  
©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 65:** 'Brief Biographical Notices of Artists', in the *Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts, & c. in the National Portrait Gallery, Exhibition Road, South Kensington*, 1881 [proof copy, annotated by George Scharf], HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 66:** Autograph letter by Benjamin Robert Haydon to Robert Southey, 9 Oct. 1820, National Portrait Gallery autographs collection (Haydon), HAL. ©National Portrait Gallery, London. The card label is placed in its original position, as indicated by the marks on the paper directly beneath.





**Fig. 67:** George Eliot (Mary Ann Cross (née Evans)), by Sir Frederic William Burton, chalk, 1865, NPG 669. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.







**Fig. 69:** Benjamin Robert Haydon, by Georgiana Margareta Zornlin, oil on canvas, 1825, NPG 510. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 70:** William Pulteney, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Bath, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, oil on canvas, 1761, NPG 337. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

to get Lord Lyttleton made Coffin. but the general Rumour is  
 that Lord Melton will have it. I was yesterday with Mr  
 Reynolds, & have fixed Friday next at twelve, to finish the Picture.  
 I have discovered a Secret by being intimate with Reynolds, that I fancy he  
 is sorry I should know. I find that none of those great Painters finish any  
 of their Pictures themselves. The same Person, <sup>Edw. Hudson</sup> but who he is, I know not  
 works for Ramsay, Reynolds, & another, <sup>Edw. Hudson</sup> my Picture will not come  
 from that Person til Thursday night, and on Friday it will be  
 totally finished, and ready to send home. I hope you have  
 had no return of your Head ach, and begin now to think of your  
 Journey towards your Sister, that you may be facing a time for  
 London. I have had a very bad Cold, but it is a tribute to  
 the Winter, we all must pay, it has made me so very lame  
 that I scarce stir abroad, & I believe I shall never go farther  
 than Hill street, any part of the Winter, I beg my compliments  
 to Mr Montagu, and if you have lately had any letters from Mrs  
 Carter I should be glad to see them.

I am Madam  
 your most obedient and most  
 humble servant Bath

with all possible respect.  
 London Thursday Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> 1761

**Fig. 71:** Autograph letter by William Pulteney, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Bath to Elizabeth Montagu, 15 Oct. 1761 [third page], National Portrait Gallery autographs collection (Bath), HAL.  
 ©National Portrait Gallery, London.





**Fig. 72:** Jeremy Bentham, studio of Thomas Frye, oil on canvas, 1760, NPG 196.  
©National Portrait Gallery, London.



**Fig. 73:** Photograph by Charles Praetorius and Wood & Co. of the hang at South Kensington, 1885, showing NPG 196 with frame underneath containing folio sheet and other manuscript material, NPG22/2/1. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.